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SHORT STORIES

A WEEKLY
MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 587.

FOR WEEK ENDING MARCH 31ST, 1900.

[ONE PENNY.]

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SHORT STORIES

No. 587.]

[ONE PENNY.]

For the Week Ending March 31st, 1900.

THE MINE OF FABULOUS WEALTH.

ABOUT thirteen years ago I happened to be on a private prospecting trip, and stopped over for some days at Los Angeles. It was in the spring of the year, and my intention was to prospect the San Gabriel mountains to the north, and perhaps, continue my route up the country, if I did not find any favourable indications nearer.

I was stopping at the Picco House, and, the day after my arrival, fell in with a man with whom I had some business acquaintance in the city. Matt Haslom, as he was called, was something of a mining operator, something of a gambler, about forty years of age, shrewd in his speculations, with a keen eye to business, and always on the look-out to turn a penny; some said he wasn't very particular about its honesty, either.

Well, we naturally got to talking, and before very long I found out that he was in that section of the country to look after some mining claims in which he was interested, though he was very mysterious and reticent about it.

"Doc," he said one morning, after I had been there a day or two—he always called me "Doc"—"can you keep a secret?"

I told him I thought I could.

"You never knew I had been a prospector myself, did you?"

I told him I never thought he would go to the trouble that prospecting usually entails; that he would prefer to make money in an easier way.

"Well, I went upon one trip, all the same," he said. "It was about three



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years ago, and we struck such ore as you never saw in your life. Talk of free gold. Why, that rock would crush heaven knows how many thousand dollars to the ton. To my veritable belief it would run from twenty to thirty per cent. pure gold."

"Then it would crush over a hundred thousand dollars to the ton," I said, dryly. "Wouldn't want many tons of that to quit operating altogether, and take things easy ever after."

"Well, you may think I'm joking," he returned. "But look at this," and he pulled a small piece of rock from his pocket.

I examined it carefully, and found that it was, as he said, phenomenally rich in free gold.

"Well," said I, "that proves nothing. I've seen many a small chunk of rock equally rich. That is not to say that there is a ledge of the same richness. An occasional nugget, found here or there, does not presuppose the presence of a harvest of them. The same way with your piece of rock. The ledge it came from might not average twenty dollars to the ton."

"But," he said earnestly, "it is my belief that there are hundreds, yes thousands, of tons of just such rock, in the place I mean."

"Then why on earth don't you work it?" said I. "You are scarcely the man to let such an opportunity slip, I should think, if you really thought so."

"Thereby hangs the tale," he answered sententiously. "The fact is, I have lost the track of the precise spot."

"Then why on earth don't you prospect the country over again?" I asked. "You must have a general idea of the location, and it seems to me it would pay you to spend months, or even a year or two, in prospecting the neighbourhood, if there were really such prospects as you say ahead."

"Ah, there's the rub! So it would," he coincided, "if there were a fair chance to do so. But it is an awful country. Were you ever up Death Valley way?"

I told him I had never been any nearer than Panamint, where we are now, on the one side, and Pahrnagat, on the other, but that I had heard enough about it.

"Well, then, you know," he went on, "what a treeless, waterless, pestilential, for-

saken region it is. I defy any one to stay in that section of the country more than a few days at a time without running short of food and water for his animals. He would have to be constantly journeying where he could reach these necessities. How can a person prospect under such conditions?"

"Then why didn't you look out for that in the first instance?" I said. "Why didn't you take bearings from some conspicuous object in the neighbourhood and put these bearings upon paper, in relation to the route you took when you left your ledge?"

"I had that," returned Haslom. "I had just such a chart of the country, with directions I could understand, but—I lost it. I have been over that region three separate times since, but the cañons and ridges of the Amargosa are so much alike that it is like hunting a needle in a bundle of hay."

"Ah, you lost your map," I said. "That's bad! But you weren't alone, were you? You said *we*, once. You must have had a partner, then? Is his memory as faulty as yours?"

"Just as bad," he replied. "He's dead. Caved in on the desert before we reached the Mojave."

I consider myself something of a judge of human nature, and thought I noticed a hesitation in Haslom's tones as he said this.

"But the best thing I can do," he continued, "is to tell you the whole story. I have never told it to a living soul before, but I want to interest you in the matter—I want to interest you so much as to induce you to join in the enterprise. You're an old hand at the business; you're on your own hook at present; you've got the time to spare. Why not give me the benefit of your advice and experience, and take a full partnership in the richest known ledge in the world?"

Such language, such offers, and such sanguine expectations I was not unused to—they are the stock-in-trade of many an adventurer who has really nothing in sight—but I had myself heard, at Pahrnagat and elsewhere, the dim traditions of fabulous treasure that float about the barren range of the Amargosa, and



I examined it carefully, and found that it was phenomenally rich in free gold.

the untrodden *mesas* of Death Valley, and as the day was warm, and the verandah of the Picco House cool, I was not averse to hearing what Matt Haslom had to say, giving it you as near as I can in his own words. My memory is fortunately good, and the whole affair left a deep and ineffaceable impression on me.

"It was just about this time three years ago," he began, "that I happened to be here in Los Angeles, and living in this very house.

"I wasn't thinking of mining investments or anything of the kind—in fact, Doc, I was here purely on a pleasure excursion. You know I have a weakness for the fair sex, and one day, while strolling along Kearny Street, I met the handsomest girl. I think, I had ever seen in my life. Tall, dark, magnificently formed, with regular features, clear olive complexion, in fact, a perfect type of Castilian beauty. I was fascinated the first time I saw her—so much so, in fact, that I kept her in sight, and made it my purpose to find out who she was. I ascertained, by dint of inquiry, that she belonged to an old Southern Californian family called Ramirez, whose home was in Los Angeles, but whose family was now rather poorly off.

"I had, just then, made rather a lucky deal in stocks, and having money to spare, and keeping posted as to the lady's movements, timed my own so as to take passage on the *Orizaba* for San Pedro, on the same trip that took her south. I need not explain to you how introductions are effected on board ship. However, to cut a long story short, I received an invitation to call upon the family in Los Angeles.

"There were only three in the household: Dolores—that was the name of the girl—a brother named Pedro, and the old mother. The main thing they knew about me was that I was a mining man from San Francisco. From that I suppose they argued that I was a man of means; and, as a matter of fact, I had at the time quite a little pile of money.

"Before long I began to get pretty intimate with the family, and one day Pedro confided to me the secret that he had some old document, relating to a very rich ledge some two hundred miles to the north-east of Los Angeles, but that not being anything of a miner himself, and not being well able to understand what the paper said, he hadn't cared to bother with looking after it, and hadn't cared to let the secret out, so that someone else might get the benefit of it. Now, however, that he had come across a regular mining man—a man who had money for mills and machinery, and all that—it had occurred to him to look closer into the matter. Would I go in with him?

"I hadn't much faith in the thing, but I had heard as you must have, too, that some very rich ledges were known to the Indians, and thought that perhaps, after all, this Mexican might have something good. So I asked to see the document, and was surprised to find that it was written in English. I saw, too, that it was old—the ink was yellow—and that made a good impression on me.

"The directions were all plain enough till they struck the Mojave desert; then they ran on by a hill here, and a butte there, and a spring elsewhere, till they struck the Amargosa range. Then they grew more precise, beginning at a lone bluff, at the entrance of a cañon upon the south-east side of the hills. From there onwards was a map showing ridges, cañons, and divides, with a black line running zig-zag through them and across them, and distances put down in yards from angle to angle. I could see it was the work of someone who

knew what he was about, and this gave me a still better impression of the thing than I had at first. I asked Pedro how he came by the document, and he told me it



I was fascinated the first time I saw her.

was given him by his father when he died some ten years before, and that he had got it from a white man, who had come to his house as far back as '51, in the last stages of consumption—there were very few Americans in Los Angeles then—and the family had nursed him and kept him till he died.

"Well," he continued, "I made up my mind that there was something in what the Mexican said, and that the thing was worth looking into; so it was agreed that he and I should start out and see whether we could not locate this mine, or ledge, or whatever it was; I to bear all the expenses of the trip and the outfit, and afterwards, if it was found to be as we thought, to put in money enough to work and develop it, the two of us to be partners, share and share alike.

"Within a week we started out, following the directions of the old miner, which we found so accurate that we had no difficulty in locating the spot, only suffering from want of water, and being forced to return before we could do anything of any consequence, intending, of course, to return right away with ample provisions to go right to work, and get out the ore."

"And the reason you couldn't do so," I said, "was, as I think you told me, that you lost your directions?"

"That's it exactly," replied Haslom.

"Were there any signs of recent work?" I next inquired.

"No. I should say nothing had been done on the

shaft for many years," replied Haslom. "There was a windlass still across the mouth of the shaft, with a rope round it and a bucket, on which a man could go up or down; and which was, of course, used for raising the dirt, or; rather, the gravel, while the shaft was being sunk. It was sunk through pure gravel most of the way, till the ledge was struck. It must have been mighty careful work, too, for there was no timbering, and if the gravel hadn't been tight packed, they couldn't have got as far down as they did without a cave."

"Was there anything in the shaft to indicate who the miners were, or anything in the neighbourhood?" I asked. "You went down, of course?"

Haslom paused a moment in abstraction.

"Yes," he said at length, "both the rope and windlass were in fair condition. The climate is so dry that things won't rot, and the cracks in the wood, through the heat, hadn't weakened it much. I went down first, and—and—yes, there was the body of a man, dried up like a dummy, and a pick, shovel, and canteen."

"Were his clothes there, too?" I asked.

"Yes," said Haslom, "his clothes were still on his back. They wouldn't rot, either, you know, in that climate," he added with a forced laugh. "Now," he went on, suddenly, "you know it all."

What could I say after that? To tell the truth, I was so impressed by the whole turn affairs had taken—so utterly mystified and perplexed, to say the least of it—that when Haslom proposed, two days after, that I should accompany him on the trip; I at once agreed to do so.

It is an easy matter to make up a prospector's outfit. We didn't bother ourselves about much baggage. A couple of mules for ourselves to ride on, and a couple of burros, to pack our provisions—one of the latter useful little animals would have been enough, under ordinary circumstances, but we thought it advisable to take an extra one, exclusively for the purpose of packing water, as it was the lack of that vital necessity that we chiefly had to fear in penetrating the desolate region whither we were bound.

Two ten-gallon kegs accordingly balanced each other across the shoulders of the auxiliary animal, though there was no necessity for filling these till we reached our last water.

Early one fine morning in April, we took the road for San Bernardino, camped there the next night, and the following morning struck northward through the Cajon Pass, across the mountains, into

the Mojave Desert. We experienced much more trouble with our animals than we had counted on.

The burros were tiring us out, and we had no mind to spend weeks upon our trip, besides the continual flog, flog, necessary to keep the animals in motion.

We were, accordingly, more than glad when a Mexican on horseback, overtook us in the Cajon, and, appreciating our dilemma and learning the direction we were taking, said he was going partly the same way himself, and offered his services. Terms were easily agreed on, the Mexican intimating that it was a good deal to him to have the privilege of camping with us on the lonely journey.

We got there on the third day after leaving San Bernardino, taking easy stages, for we didn't care to tire our beasts out, as the real hardship of the journey was still in store for them.

While the Mexican, whom we only knew by the name of Juan, was staking his horses out on the best feed he could find, and Haslom and I were cooking supper, he said to me:

"Whitworth, there's something queer about that man. He makes me shudder every time I look at him."

Accustomed as I was to Haslom's own queer ideas and superstitions, I only laughed, and said:

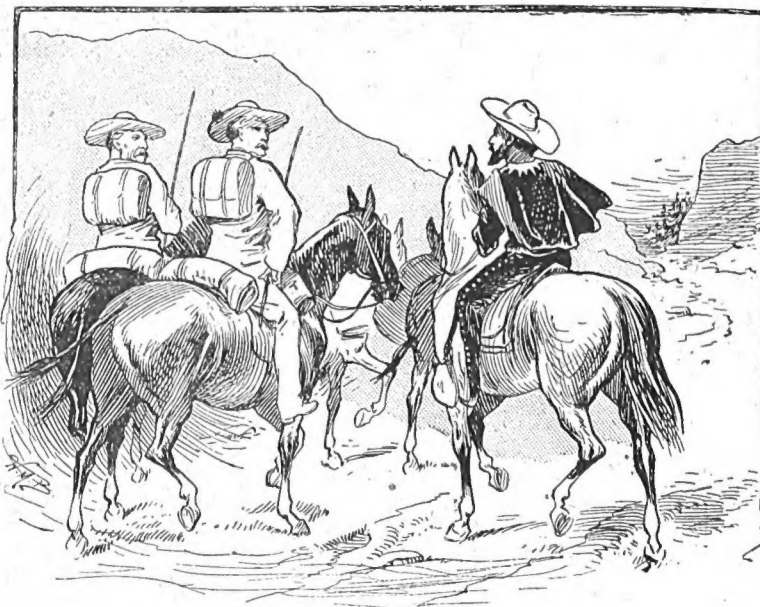
"Nonsense, I think he's a nice, quiet fellow; and another thing is, he makes himself uncommonly useful."

"I can't help it," returned Haslom with an ominous shake of the head; "he reminds me strangely of my partner, Pedro Ramirez. He's so like him he might be his brother."

As Juan just then returned to camp, we said nothing more. I looked at him more closely, and could only see as he stood there in his short capote—which, by the way, he never removed, even when Haslom and myself were glad to strip to our shirts and overalls—that his form was slight and graceful; that his features, where not hidden by a glossy black beard, were delicate and regu-

lar; while his hands and feet were remarkably small and well-proportioned. In fact, I thought him a decided acquisition to our party, and determined to retain him as long as he would consent to stay with us, as I knew there was stiff work for us ahead.

Next morning, at day-break, we loaded up our spare burro with full water kegs, and, leaving the last trace of civilization behind, struck northward into the desert. From the bend of the Mojave to the great, dry, alkali lake—known as the sink of the



A Mexican on horseback overtook us in the Cajon, and offered his services.

Amargosa, or Death Valley, where the ill-starred emigrant train, in early days, laid down their lives, almost to a man and woman, from thirst and the terrible heat of the natural oven—enclosed by a mountain range on either side, is not far in point of distance.

We, however, had something like fifty miles further to go, and to penetrate that part of Inyo County lying close to the Nevada line, which is the only spot in the whole of California that has never seen the theodolite, or heard the rattle of the surveyor's chain.

Accordingly, we urged our animals to the utmost, and camped that night on the banks of the Amargosa.

Next morning we were up with the morning star, and by sunrise sighted the isolated bluff at the mouth of the cañon, mentioned in the miner's directions as the spot where we had to begin to penetrate the mountains. Haslom rode forward leisurely, holding the chart in his hand, and looking carefully about him as he went along. Juan, with the *burros*, was trotting merrily ahead, for we had been only too glad to keep him, as he had not yet said anything about going, at which I, at any rate, was heartily glad.

"See!" said Haslom, suddenly, clutching my arm with a trembling hand; "he has turned up that cañon to the left—just the direction marked in the map. How did he know that?"

The man's face was white, and he could scarcely sit in his saddle. I felt sorry for his weakness.

Ten minutes later, Juan drove his *burros* unconcernedly over a divide, which also turned out to be the right direction. Ten minutes later, he took another right turn, along the top of a ridge, Haslom and I meanwhile following at about fifty yards in his rear. I could not help acknowledging to myself that the coincidence was extraordinary.

Well, to make a long story short, Juan, with the *burros*, kept ahead of us, and never missed a turn, as it was set down in the map, till at last, on crossing a ridge, we saw the alkali flats of Death Valley, shimmering beneath us in the sunlight, and, upon descending the hill a little way, found ourselves suddenly at the brink of the old shaft.

Haslom was trembling all over, and looked as white as a sheet as he dismounted. Juan was sitting on the ground, leisurely puffing a cigarette, the most unconcerned of the party.

I approached the edge of the shaft, and looked down. In the dim light I thought I distinguished the figure of a man lying at the bottom. The windlass, rope, and bucket were all there, the latter at the top, and the rope coiled round the drum.

I asked Haslom if he would go down first, which he agreed to do, so I stood by the windlass while he got into the bucket, and I proceeded to lower him.

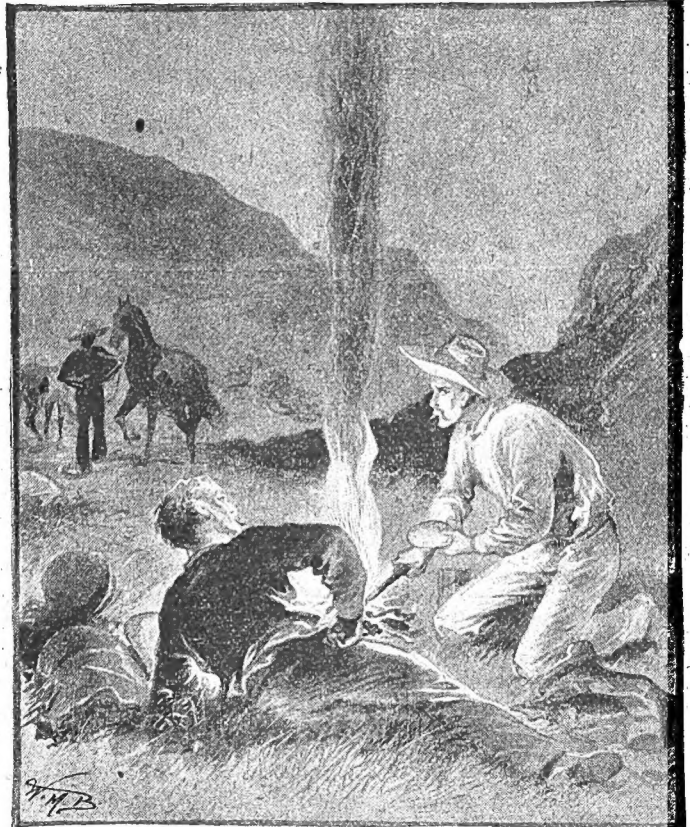
"There's a dead body here!" he presently shouted from below; "prepare to hoist. He must be got out of the way before anything can be done!"

We couldn't afford to waste any time. Minutes were precious, as our water was running short.

Presently, Haslom called out to hoist, and in two minutes the bucket appeared at the top, and Juan assisted me to take out the limp, mummy-like corpse of

a man, about whose shrivelled skin and rattling bones hung the faded remains of an old blue suit.

Juan lifted the corpse very carefully, and, as I thought, tenderly, out, and laid it gently on one side. I could



While the Mexican was staking his horses out, Haslom and I were cooking supper.

hear Haslom's pick clanking at the bottom of the shaft.

Presently he shouted out:

"I've got enough for a showing. Let down the bucket, and hoist me up. We have no time to lose getting back."

I took hold of the windlass and began to lower, and when the bucket reached the bottom, I could hear Haslom piling rock into it. I looked down, and was watching him as well as I could, when I was startled by the swift, sudden blows of an axe upon the drum of the windlass.

I looked up and saw Juan standing with the axe uplifted to deal the wood another blow.

I made a jump for him, but, before I could arrest his arm, down came the axe, and windlass and rope both went crashing to the bottom of the shaft.

There was a moment of silence, and then, from the dim depths, came a yell, the like of which I hope never to hear again. The despairing shriek of a lost spirit might only fitly parallel what I heard.

I turned to Juan and said:

"What have you done?"

"He left my brother to die in the pit, and now he is there himself," said the Mexican, quietly; "this dead man here is my brother, Pedro Ramirez. I am his sister, Dolores. I am, also, the fortune-teller of Los Angeles. I caused that report to be spread about me, and laid a trap for him. I stole his paper, three years ago, and hence could tell him that he would find it at my uncle's house, where I caused it to be put. I have been here alone before to satisfy myself of the truth of surmises. I have keen eyes, and could see my brother at the bottom of the pit. I came here to bury him. That is all."

The girl—she had now thrown off her capote, and I could see that she was a girl—took a pick and dug a shallow grave, as well as she could, in the sand. She then put the shrivelled corpse tenderly in, and raked the sand over it. Then she knelt down a minute and prayed.

"The grave is a shallow one," she said simply; "but it will serve to keep away the buzzards. Now get ready as fast as you can, and I will guide you out of these hills."

And now there rang from the bottom of the shaft a peal of demoniac laughter. It was ghastly in that awful solitude. Again and again it rang out in hideous merriment. It was evident that Haslom had lost his reason. At that short distance of thirty feet he had, no

doubt, heard all that had been said. That, and the realization of his awful doom, had dethroned his senses.

There was no possible way of reaching or assisting him, situated as I was. I could certainly have let down my *riata*, and thus pulled up the fallen rope, but even that I could not, by mere brute force, have brought to the surface, as there was nothing whereon to rig a purchase, and the sand was so loose and friable, at the edge of the shaft, that it would have been dangerous to exert any pressure there.

Nor was there a stick of wood, in the whole country round, to make anything from. The only thing to be done was to summon assistance from the nearest station, and come to the rescue.

This I did, two days after, when I got to the bend of the Mojave, which I did alone, as the girl left me after seeing me safe on the plain.

I told my story, and succeeded in enlisting two men to accompany me to the rescue of the imprisoned man. Suffice it to say, we never found the place, though we underwent extreme privations in the attempt.

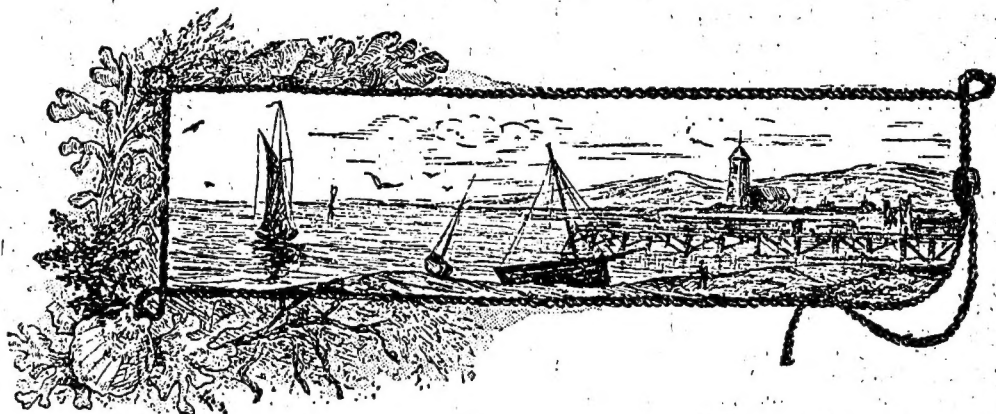
It then became evident that Haslom must have perished; and sadly I gave up the quest.

And now, my young friend, you know why all the gold in Ophir would not tempt me to go prospecting any more in the Amargosa.

E. A. PEDFORD.



I looked up and saw Juan standing with the axe up-lifted.





CAMBRIDGE WINS!

"WELL, Vincent, and what says uncle?"

"Emmie, darling," and the young man went hurriedly forward and took the fair girl by the two hands, "your uncle is inexorable. He says that he has made up his mind, and that nothing shall force him to alter his decision."

"He appears to forget," and the young girl's lip curled disdainfully, "that I shall one day be of age to choose for myself. I hate Fred Weeks, and——"

"And you love me? Is it not so, my Emmie?"

Miss Streeter made no reply, but her companion evidently took her answer for granted, and folded her tenderly in his arms. They were both young—she not more than eighteen; he scarcely twenty-three. And they were both very much in love, only a hard-hearted uncle had resolved to separate them and to give his niece's hand to a wealthier suitor. Vincent Hollands was still at Oxford, and had yet a position and fortune to make for himself, for of money he possessed very little; Fred Weeks, on the contrary, was a man of the world, and owned a fine property in the West of England. Evidently this latter was the most eligible suitor for the hand of wealthy old Squire Streeter's orphan niece and only relative in the world. And old Squire Streeter was resolved that Emmie should become Mrs. Weeks and the mistress of Wealdstone Park.

"Not but what she has got an equal chance with myself in choosing her husband," the Squire told young Hollands during the interview which had just concluded, between the young Oxonian and his beloved one's uncle.

"If Oxford wins the boat race I choose her husband and shall most certainly marry her to my young friend Weeks; if, however, Cambridge takes the honours she can go to the dogs her own way."

"As much as to say, sir, that I would bring her to ruin and misery were I to marry her."

"If the cap fits, wear it, Vincent Hollands. What are your prospects in life? You have no money worth speaking of."

"I have talent, sir."

"So has many a poor wretch walking the streets of London, hungry and penniless."

"Besides, I have a fair amount of interest with certain influential personages."

"The interest of a few thousands in the bank is worth

the interest of all the influential men in the world put together. Sovereigns are made of gold and are heavy; promises are made of air, and, as a rule, end in what they are made of. But all the talking in the world will not persuade me to alter my decision. This is a bet which I have made with my niece upon the boat race——"

"Without her consent, sir?"

"Without her consent or with it—it makes no difference. Or let us say that I have made it with Fred Weeks. Any other guardian of a young lady would immediately have closed with Weeks when he asked me for her hand, and promised to make such a handsome provision for her; but I, like a tender-hearted old fogey, said: 'No, give the girl an equal chance. If Oxford wins, you shall have her, Weeks; if Oxford loses, she shall marry her groom if she pleases, or any other equally ineligible suitor.'"

"You can scarcely call it an equal chance, sir," said Vincent, bitterly. "You know that Oxford is bound to win."

"I know nothing of the sort, since Oxford has not yet won, and the race has not been run. I believe you are one of the crew?"

"I am, sir."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the Squire heartily. "Do your best for the honour of your University, and remember, Vincent, my boy, that each stroke you pull is a stroke nearer towards placing your fair lady-love in the arms of a wealthier, and, consequently, more suitable husband."

"Yes, Emmie," said Vincent, as he was relating to the young girl the account of his interview with her uncle, "he actually reminded me of that fact, and he laughed heartily, as though it were the most capital joke in the world. I never heard of such a cold-hearted scheme—making a young lady's happiness or misery of her life-time depend upon a mere boat race! And then to call it an equal chance! Why, the betting is three to one upon Oxford. Everyone knows we are bound to win."

"Whether Oxford or Cambridge wins," said Miss Streeter simply, but firmly, "I shall never marry Fred Weeks. My uncle cannot force me to do that."

"No; but, as he told me in very plain terms, he could leave you penniless if you disobeyed him."

"And I suppose that Mr. Vincent Hollands would refuse to wed with a penniless bride."

"Emmie!" exclaimed the young Oxonian, folding his arms again round the beautiful girl, "you know that is not true. For my own sake I should prefer that you came to me poor and dependent; but you—you who have been reared in every luxury, accustomed to every pleasure that money can bestow—how could you battle with the world, with its poverty, and its consequent trials and sorrows? Would you not regret the step you had taken? Would you not inwardly blame me for

having allowed you to take such a step? And to think, Emmie, darling, that I have to work my hardest to bring all this trouble upon you!" continued Vincent passionately. "Much as I love my *Alma Mater* I would fervently pray that Oxford might lose this infernal race. Oh, if the race were only a very close one, and as were nearing home I could be suddenly taken ill or that my oar should snap in two! Cambridge then might shoot ahead, and——"

"Vincent," exclaimed the young girl, almost fiercely, "what are you saying? You deem me too daintily brought up to marry a poor man, but did you ever think for a moment that I would wed with a dishonourable one? No, my poor boy," she continued in her usual loving manner, "I know you did not mean for a moment what you said. Act as though there were nothing more serious at stake upon the race than the glory and honour of winning, and then leave the result, whatever it may be, in the all-wise hands of Providence. I have told you that I should never marry Fred Weeks; upon yourself alone, Vincent, it depends whether I become your wife or not."

With his arm clasped around her waist, they left the shady arbour in which they had been standing, and strolled slowly down a narrow pathway in the direction of the house.

Ere they had completely disappeared from sight, a tall, elegantly-dressed man crept noiselessly from the back of the arbour and gazed after the pair of lovers, a merciless look of hatred gleaming from his dark eyes.

"No," he hissed between his closed teeth, "you will never marry me, I know; but neither shall you ever wed that whining schoolboy! Taken ill! The oar break in two! And he is just mean hound enough either to feign the one or to actually succeed in doing the other. We shall see, Vincent Hollands, what the all-wise hands of Providence, as our pious little girl terms it, can fashion in your favour."

He took a cigar out of his pocket, and having carefully lit it, strolled slowly by a different pathway towards his friend's house.

It is the morning of the race. Though still early in spring, the sun shone as gloriously warm and bright as on a summer's day. The grand old river seemed proud to carry the hundreds of joyous burdens upon its broad bosom, and gayly reflected the deep azure of the sky in its tranquil depths.

From Putney onwards, the towing-path was literally packed with loud-voiced, merry onlookers. Men of rather horsey appearance with note-books in their hands, and field-glasses at their sides; city clerks, fortunate enough to have the morning free, endeavouring to cut the heavy swell—and failing; country bumpkins who mistook every boat which scudded merrily by for one of the University crew and cheered lustily; dashing men about town with heavy moustache, and eyeglass in eye, looking as though the whole performance were too much of a bore to be endured; rowdy Harriets, unkempt and unwashed, with idiotic fringe and long, loud-coloured feathers; gay ladies of the chorus with noisy laugh and powdered face; haughty dames and aristocratic demoiselles, wearing abundantly one or other of the two blues; Italians with ice-creams, costers with apples, oranges, or nuts, men selling the colours of the rival crews—merry shouts of laughter, noisy disputes, screams of frightened women, deep cursings of angry men, hoarse cries of costers vaunting their wares, shrill bark-

ings of dogs, loud cheerings of the merry parties as they pulled swiftly by in their light boats—and above all the sun shining glorious and bright in a cloudless sea of blue.

At last the glad cry arose, "They're off! They're off!" and the eyes of all were intent upon the river, each one apparently taking the deepest interest in the race, although, in the opinion of most, the end was already a foregone conclusion. Oxford was bound to win! But at any rate if Oxford was bound to win, their rivals seemed determined to make the race as hard a one for them as they possibly could.

Over the greater portion of the course the two boats were almost abreast, and the excitement of the spectators was intense and rapidly increasing with each stroke of the oars. Loud shouts of "Cambridge! Cambridge! Oxford! Oxford!" rang upon the air. "Bravo, Dark Blue! Go ahead! Light Blues for ever!" And still the two boats kept as near as possible abreast, whilst the onlookers were almost hoarse with cheering.

As the crews were nearing home, however, the Oxonians broke steadily though slowly away from their opponents, and it was soon apparent to all wearers of the light blue that their colours must come off but second best in the grand national race. The dark blue adherents were vociferous in their shouts and cheers, and the winning-post was almost gained when—what had happened?

The Oxford boat seemed to stand still a moment and sway as if it had received some sudden shock, then it sped along again, but not so swift as before, whilst the Cambridge crew, straining every nerve, caught up to their original position. For a single second they ran again abreast, and then the Light Blues, swift and steady as an arrow in its flight, shot speedily ahead, and won the race by nearly half a boat's length. The tranquil air of the spring morning was well-nigh driven frantic with the shouts and cries and cheers and wild halloos. But amidst them all the vague question passed from one to the other—What had happened? Then the answer came. An oar of one of the Oxford crew had broken just almost at the last moment; and then, again—but only in whispers this time—that it had purposely been broken, and that the race had been wilfully lost.

Most of the papers on the next day were silent as to this last wild suspicion, although one or two of them did offer some slight innuendoes to that effect, but these latter were at once silenced by the Fellows of the Oxford University, who most strenuously denied any suspicion of foul play on the part of their crew, which denial was just as strenuously confirmed by the Light Blues. But it was whispered in many a fashionable West-end club that the suspicion was, in fact, no suspicion at all, but a real, indisputable fact. An oar had been so severely damaged before the crew had started on their race that the only wonder was that it had borne the strain of rowing so long.

The University boat race—a fact utterly unknown before—had most deliberately and wilfully been given away. But the general public knew nought of this, and the sad affair was soon hushed up; though one man was henceforth dishonoured in the eyes of all who knew him or of whom he cared to know.

On the following morning Emmie Streeter received the following letter:

"Dear Miss Streeter,—After the conversation which took place between us on the afternoon when I had the memorable interview with you uncle, I do not know if you will believe me when I most emphatically assert that

I am innocent of the cowardly action laid to my charge. I worked my hardest from first to last in order to win the race, and if the oar had been tampered with before the race had started it was without my knowledge and most certainly not at my instigation. But the world knows no difference between a dishonourable man and a dishonoured one. The latter I know I am in the eyes of all, and yet through no fault of mine. Therefore, Miss Streeter, I feel it my duty to resign any pretensions I may have had to your hand. England shall henceforth know me no more. All I ask, all I plead for is, that in memory of the happy hours we have spent together, you will will do your best to believe in my innocence. Whither I shall go I am unable yet to say; but of this, Emmie, be sure that as long as this poor heart of mine beats it will be with love for you, as long as these lips can speak they will pray for your happiness in this world and in the next.

"VINCENT HOLLAND."

"My poor, poor boy!" exclaimed the young girl as the hot tears streamed down her pale, sorrow-stricken cheeks. "How could he think for a moment that I should believe him guilty? But he will come to-morrow. He surely cannot leave England for ever without even saying farewell."

But the days and weeks and even months passed on, and he came not. And yet the fair girl watched and waited patiently—in the fragrant, freshening morn, when the noontide sun shone forth in a sea of cloudless blue, or when the stars were shining here and there, through fleecy clouds in a dim, shadowy sky, watched and waited through verdant spring and glowing summer seasons; through sombre autumns, and drear winter-tides; watched and waited till the spirits drooped and the heart grew sick, and life seemed one long miserable twilight, where one knew not what was false and what was true.

And ten long years passed away, and Vincent was seated on the trunk of a fallen tree, resting from his labours, in the fairy land of California. He had been an exile in many countries, but had found no balm for a wounded heart. He had suffered the pangs of misery and hunger of an unsuccessful gold-digger, but he had laboured on with a wild perseverance—not for the sake of money—that was useless to him now, but because in hard work and untiring labours he found the nearest approach to peace and consolation. And yet of late fortune had favoured him.

He was wealthy beyond all what in his more youthful days he had ever dared to hope or to expect. And as he now sat upon the fallen tree he held a newspaper in

his hands. It was an old one which some new miner had brought with him to the camp, and in it he had read the notice of the death of one whom he had known in those old glorious days before shame and dishonour had been heaped upon his head.

It was the death of Frederick Weeks, and the article concluded by saying that, as the late proprietor of Wealdstone Park had died unmarried, the property would pass into the hands of a very distant relative with whom Weeks had never agreed, and whom, so it was reported, he had most cordially hated.

And as the sun went down he was still seated motionless upon the fallen tree, heedless of the low cadence of the rustling leaves wooing the answering murmur of the water, heedless of the waning evening and the wan, young moon appearing like a spectre in the sky. Thoughts of his far-away home had filled his breast; longing to see again the dear, familiar scenes of boyhood had taken possession of him, and, above all, the wild wish to look upon her face again, and then to wander away once more and hide himself from the eyes of all until death should release him from the shame and dishonour which had clung to him.

And so he left California and returned to England. But it was with open arms that Squire Streeter received him.

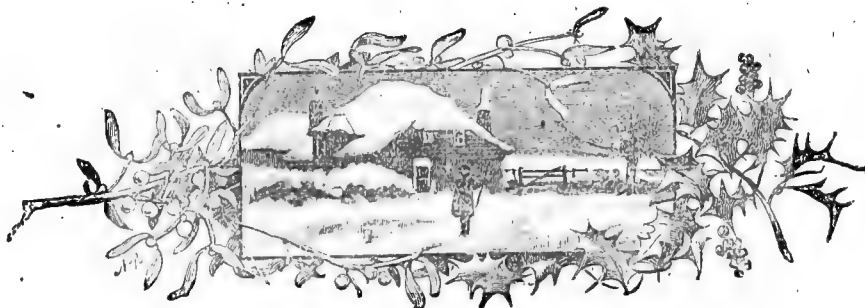
"My dear fellow," he said, "why did you leave us like that? Neither Emmie nor myself ever believed you guilty of that mean act, as my niece will tell you herself when you see her. We have spent a little fortune in advertising for you, especially since that scoundrel Weeks' death."

"Why especially since his death?" Vincent asked in wonderment.

"Because it was he that had the oar tampered with. On his death-bed he asked to see me, and confessed that it was he who had it done, but would not say how, or who assisted him in his diabolical scheme. He had overheard your conversation with Emmie in the arbour, and as he then discovered that my niece would never marry him he was resolved that she should never wed you, and he took the best means in his power to prevent it. But there is Emmie herself coming in through the gateway. Go to her. I do not think she will wish you to leave England again."

And in the same arbour in which he had once before taken her in his arms he clasped her to his breast again, and the long ten years of weary watching and waiting, of separation and sorrow, were forgotten in the blissful ecstasy of the moment.

E. V. W.



Her Lesson



SHE was a wild little piece, with her pretty, dimpled face full of mischief—always saying

extravagant things and giving people wrong impressions, and yet she bore the important title of—Mrs. St. John MacDonald. Her husband, who was decidedly grave and sedate, thought she did not support his name with sufficient dignity.

Everyone wondered how two people so totally unlike as St. John MacDonald and Elsie Montgomery had ever been drawn together, but it is a true saying that people like their opposites.

"My dear," said Mr. MacDonald one day, as he entered the apartment where his bride was sitting. "I have heard something very strange."

"What was it?" asked Elsie.

"I heard that your parents were very much opposed to our union, and that we were obliged to elope at night, by jumping out of the back window, and that then we had gone immediately to the registry office and had been married without the knowledge of your parents who, in consequence, had disinherited you, and had refused to have anything more to do with you."

"How very strange," exclaimed Elsie, "how could such a report have originated?"

"Have you not said something in fun which might have given rise to it?"

"No," said Elsie, thoughtfully, and then she added: "Oh, now I do remember, the other day, when Flora Nelson was here—you know she has such a perfect horror of old gentlemen. She asked me in her innocent way, how I came to marry a person so much older than myself."

"For my part," said she, "I never should wish to marry an old man, and pa and ma wouldn't let me if I did."

"She is such an honest little creature, and always takes everything so literally that I wished to astonish her, so I replied: 'I sprang out of the back window at night, when my parents were asleep, and I was married quite early the next morning.' I suppose that must

have been the way the story originated, and it has gained, of course, by circulation."

"But, Elsie, what did possess you to say such a thing?" continued Mr. MacDonald.

"Only for mischief; I meant to undeceive her before she left me, but I forgot it."

"Do you think it right to say what is not true, even in fun, Elsie?" asked her husband, with a grave look.

"But it really was strictly true, St. John; for do you not recollect my telling you that the night before we were married, I became alarmed by a cry of fire next door, and I sprang out of the window which was near the ground, and as soon as the first feeling of fear was over, I returned to waken my father and mother."

"What you said then was true in the letter, but not so in the spirit?" asked Mr. MacDonald, as he gazed earnestly into his wife's face.

"Now, grandpa," said Elsie, as she stroked down his whiskers, "please don't preach me a sermon, for I was only in fun when I said it, and I think people might understand me; everyone is so dreadfully matter-of-fact."

Elsie laughed and wondered what made her husband so sober, and wished that he was a little more playful; while he in his turn, wished that his wife was not quite so full of spirits. But he had still considerable annoyance to go through with, before Elsie gave up this little propensity.

It was all in vain that he talked to her about dignity.

"I am afraid, my dear, that your fun will give me considerable trouble," said Mr. MacDonald to his wife one day, after another strange report had reached his ears—the result of Mrs. MacDonald's love of fun.

"I am very sorry," said Elsie, as she raised her sweet, childish face to his.

As he bent down to impress a kiss on those rosy lips, he felt half tempted to give up the plan which he had formed for preventing further mischief, but he recollected that many times her love for fun had drawn them into trouble, and with an effort he resolved to carry it through.

"I shall have to leave you for a few days, my dear."

"Leave me!" she exclaimed—"for what?"

"I am obliged to go away to-morrow morning, on business, but I will make my stay as short as possible."

It was with a heavy heart that Elsie retired that night. She could not bear the thought of being

separated from her husband even for a few days, and her ever active imagination conjured up all sorts of dreadful things which might happen to one or the other of them before they should meet again. But it was necessary for him to go, and the next morning she followed him to the door, received his parting kiss and then returned to her room to cry.

In the afternoon the bright sun seemed to invite her out for a walk, and she accordingly went. She met a number of her friends, but some bowed coldly, while others passed her by with a scornful look. At one time she discovered two ladies conversing together and looking at her. What could it mean? Then she caught the words:

"Very strange, is it not?"

"Yes," was the reply; "but then they were so un-susited to each other, that one can scarcely wonder at it."

"That is true," continued the first, "he is so very grave, and she is so full of mischief."

As Elsie walked quickly on wondering what they could mean, and if it were possible that they referred to her, she lost the remainder of their conversation.

She returned to her house feeling sick at heart and earnestly longing for her husband to come back to her. What she had heard puzzled her; she felt sure that some false report had been circulated, but how she could not tell.

While she was musing on this subject the door opened and Mrs. Kerman was announced. Elsie rose to receive her visitor, who remarked in a very commiserating tone:

"You poor little creature! I have come in on purpose to condole with you."

"Thank you," said Elsie, mistaking her meaning. "I almost think I need condolence, being left alone in this great house, with only the servants."

"Yes," continued Mrs. Kerman, "but you may be sure that every one will take your part, for people always do sympathize with the ladies you know. I think he was a perfect wretch to leave you, and so soon too."

Her meaning began to dawn upon Elsie's mind, and she exclaimed almost fiercely:

"Of whom are you speaking?"

"Mr. MacDonald," replied Mrs. Kerman, in some surprise at Elsie's excited manner. "I heard that he had quarrelled with you and that was the reason of the separation and knowing that you must feel lonely, I hastened to offer my sympathy, trusting that you would excuse the intrusion."

Our heroine drew herself up with considerable dignity, as she replied:

"Allow me to say that you have been quite mis-informed; this is the first time that I have heard of any quarrel, and the separation was caused by some business which has called my husband away for a few days."

Mrs. Kerman hastened to apologize and soon after left the house. Then came honest little Flora Nelson, who threw her arm around Elsie's neck and exclaimed in a tone of sincere sympathy:

"My poor, dear Mrs. MacDonald, how sorry I do feel for you!"

"Why do you feel sorry for me, Flora?" asked Elsie, in a calm voice.

"Oh, because—because—of this dreadful rumour," said Flora, hesitatingly.

"That my husband and I had quarrelled and separated?" said Elsie.

"You have heard of it then, and it is not true?"

"Oh, yes, I have heard of it, and I have also been con-doled with, but I cannot imagine what gave rise to such an idea."

Flora did not hurry away as Mrs. Kerman had done, and Elsie found it a comfort to have a friend with her. She was obliged to receive visits of condolence all the afternoon, and in the evening her gentlemen friends came "to offer their sympathies," as they said, but Elsie thought it was to satisfy their curiosity.

Everyone expressed such deep sorrow for her that she almost began to think she must be a very unhappy being, and she became quite wrought up to a state of wretchedness.

This state of affairs continued until the return of Mr. MacDonald, which took place rather sooner than his wife had anticipated.

Elsie ran to meet him, and throwing herself into his arms, burst into tears.

"What ails my pet?" he asked, as he kissed her affectionately.

"Oh, St. John," sobbed Elsie, "there has been such a strange report circulated throughout the whole place—they said that you and I had quarrelled, and that was the reason you had gone and left me."

A quizzical look came over MacDonald's face as he replied:

"What very strange reports, my dear, gain credence! How could this have arisen, do you know?"

His wife answered:

"I have not the slightest idea; I am sure it could not have been from anything that I said, this time."

St. John MacDonald passed his hand thoughtfully across his face as he remarked slowly: "Could it have been from a remark that I made on the morning I left you? I recollect meeting one of the neighbours who inquired how you were. I replied that you were very well when I last saw you, but that we had had a few words together and separated. I noticed that he looked rather surprised at my answer."

"Oh! St. John. How could you?" exclaimed Elsie.

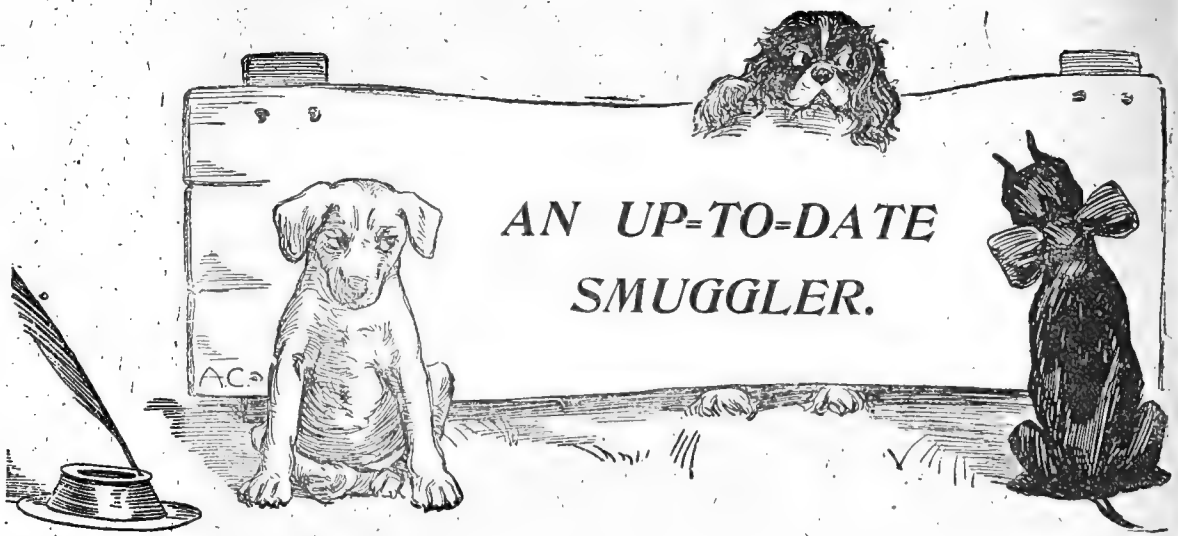
"Why, my dear, it was only in fun, and then it was strictly true; but people are so very matter-of-fact—anyone might know that I would not leave you, no matter for how short a time, without having a few parting words with you."

"But it has placed me in a very strange position. I did not think that of you, St. John."

Mr. MacDonald folded his little wife in his arms and asked to be forgiven. Elsie had generosity enough to see how much trouble she had often been the cause of bringing upon him in a similar way, and now, in her turn, she laughed heartily over the mortification she had suffered.

Her husband's remedy proved a most effectual one, and from that time she was more careful to preserve truth in the spirit, as well as in the letter, of what she said.

D. I. MENTOR.



AN UP-TO-DATE SMUGGLER.

MANY people seem to imagine that a purser on board one of our big Atlantic liners has got a remarkable easy time of it; in short, that his position may not be inaptly described as a bed of roses. They appear to think that his duties chiefly consist of allotting the passengers their seats at table, assisting in the church service on Sundays, and making himself friendly and agreeable all round.

Let me say at once—and I speak from pretty considerable experience—that such is very far from being the case. Nowadays, when one of these ocean greyhounds can skim across the Atlantic well within the week, the purser has his hands pretty full from start to finish.

If he had only to reckon with his ordinary duties, it would be right enough. But he has various other matters to attend to, and that is exactly where the rub comes in. When you have upwards of a thousand souls, drawn from almost every class in life, cooped up together on board ship, you are bound to have some very singular experiences. And whenever anything goes wrong, if there is a complaint to be investigated, or a squabble between two passengers to be adjusted, it all falls upon the shoulders of the unfortunate purser.

Strange things happen almost every voyage—stranger, perhaps, than most people have any idea of. Someone has very truly remarked that nothing has ever occurred, or is likely to occur, that London has not already witnessed. And after all, a modern Atlantic liner is only a little slice of that great cosmopolitan city transferred to the ocean. The extraordinary incidents, the mysteries—ay, and occasionally the tragedies—which come to light on board one of these floating villages are truly surprising.

Take the case of the Amiable Old Lady, for instance.

That is what we generally called her when speaking of her among ourselves, but on the passenger list she figured as Mrs. Franklin Richards. A pleasant, chatty, good-tempered soul she was, rather prim and old-fashioned, it is true, and a bit prosy at times. She was well-known on board our boat, having crossed with us half-a-dozen times at least. Indeed, she seemed to have taken quite a fancy to the ship and to the officers, for she made it a point to wait a week or two for our vessel rather than sail in another.

Her prime favourite amongst us, however, was the doctor—a big, burly, jovial Scotsman named Grant. As Mrs. Franklin Richards seemed to be plentifully endowed with this world's goods—her money being entirely under her own control, too—and having no near kith or kin, the worthy doctor was most assiduous in his attentions. No doubt he entertained a reasonable hope that if he got firmly established in her good graces, the name of Robert Eustace Grant, M.D., might ultimately find a place in her will. That he had fairly good grounds for this expectation could not be denied, for the old lady herself had gone so far as to throw out sundry hints of a substantial legacy from time to time.

And so the burly doctor laid himself out to get on the right side of Mrs. Franklin Richards. The number of prescriptions he wrote, the quantity of medicine he made up, was truly surprising. He was always ready with his arm when she wished to go on deck, invited her to afternoon tea in his cabin, and listened gravely to her mild lectures upon the evils of indulging too freely in tobacco and gin cocktails, to both of which creature comforts he had a decided leaning. She kept him well supplied with reading matter, in the shape of tracts and other serious literature, which, I regret to say, he promptly converted into pipe lights the moment her back was turned.

On one voyage out, when the amiable old lady gave us the pleasure of her company once more, the doctor seemed to make greater headway with her than ever; so much so, indeed, that he took to studying the stock and share lists secretly, with a view to selecting a suitable investment for his legacy when the time came. On reaching New York he took a cordial and even affectionate leave of our passenger, begged her to be careful of her health—the humbug!—and hoped he would soon have the gratification of seeing her again.

Though I took a lively interest in this little bye-play, and it afforded me some amusement to watch its development, the whole thing was driven out of my head for the time being by another and more serious matter that cropped up a day or two later.

One morning I was somewhat surprised to receive a visit from a well-known New York detective, with whom I happened to be acquainted. He came in looking very grave and preoccupied, as if he had some weighty matter upon his mind.

"Well, Mr. Morse," I said, as I greeted him, "what are you after now?"

"Diamonds," he replied, briefly.

"Stolen?" I asked.

"No."

"What, then?"

"Smuggled."

I was not altogether surprised to hear it, for, in common with the public generally, I had gathered from the newspapers that diamonds were being smuggled into the States in considerable quantities of late. How the culprit, whoever he was, managed to get the stones through the custom-house undetected was a mystery.

The officials there are a particularly shrewd and wide-awake set of men, and it takes a remarkably clever customer to throw dust in their eyes.

They are not often imposed upon, you may be sure. They seem to know at a glance whether a trunk has a false bottom or not, or if an innocent-looking hand-bag is all that it pretends. Cigars they appear to detect by scent; they swoop down on lace, no matter in what unlikely corner it may be stowed away. As for diamonds—well, it is there they come out strong. I have known them to pounce upon an ordinary, silver-mounted walking stick, unscrew the top, and discover a nice little nest of gems secreted in a hollow of the cane.

"I have heard that something of the kind has been going on for some time past," I remarked, as the detective sat down.

"For six months or thereabouts," he replied. "As long ago as that, a parcel of gems, said to be worth over fifty thousand dollars, was got through. How it was done, no one could tell. The Custom's people got a wiggling over it, and kept their eyes open afterwards, you may depend. But in spite of their vigilance, in spite of all their precautions, the same thing occurred again and again. Though they were put upon their mettle, and resorted to all kinds of artifices, they couldn't place a stop upon it."

"He must be a clever rascal, this smuggler," I put in.

"So it would seem. It is plain he has hit upon some entirely new and original method, for all the old dodges have been played out long ago. The extraordinary part of it is, that the secret agents abroad, who supply us with information on matters of this kind, appear to be just as much at sea as we are over here."

"Do you think it is the work of a gang?" I asked.

"I am strongly of opinion that it is not," he answered.

"Why so?"

"Well, if there were two or three in it, one or other of them would have been sure to split before this, for there is a tidy little reward out. Take my word for it, this is a single-man job. And," he added, in tones of conviction, looking straight across at me, "whoever the smuggler is, he came over in your ship on the very last voyage."

"The deuce!"

"That he did. See here; your boat got in on Monday last—the only liner which arrived that day, as it so happens. On Tuesday, according to information which has reached us, a packet of gems is handed over to a broker in Chicago, without enriching Uncle Sam's treasury by a single, solitary cent. What do you make

of that? Now the question is, did you spot any likely party on board—anyone whom you might have cause to suspect?"

"No," I replied, running over the list of passengers in my mind, "unless your man came steerage—"

"Pooh!" he interrupted. "that's not likely. He patronizes the saloon—travels in style, you may be sure."

"I am sorry I cannot assist you," I said. "What steps do you propose to take?"

"Well I don't know," he returned. "It is just possible I may run across with you when you are going back, so as to make inquiries on the other side."

During the remainder of our stay in New York I saw no more of him; nor, when the passenger list was handed to me, could I find his name therein. Something must have occurred in the meantime to make him alter his plans.

But if the detective failed to turn up, we had an agreeable surprise by finding the Amiable Old Lady back again amongst us. It appears that she had received a cable from England to say that an old friend of hers was dangerously ill, which caused her to cut short her stay and hurry home.

The doctor was overjoyed, of course. He determined to make the most of this lucky chance; and if that matter of the legacy was not brought to a satisfactory issue, once and for all, before we reached Liverpool, it certainly would not be his fault.

But on this occasion, much to his disgust, he found himself confronted by two formidable rivals for the old lady's favour, who seemed in a fair way to oust him altogether. They were the very opposite extremes as far as their calling went; one being a High Church clergyman, the other, a Salvation Army captain. They both laid vigorous siege to Mrs. Franklin Richards, however, and each endeavoured to win her over to his own particular doctrines. One day she seemed to favour the parson; the next she inclined strongly to the follower of General Booth. All the way across it was a vexed question as to which of the two would carry the day, and whether she would ultimately be induced to leave her money to a Clergy Benevolent Fund, or to endow a Salvation Army shelter. Between the two, the doctor saw that legacy of his slipping through his fingers, and was not a little savage in consequence.

Late in the following autumn Mrs. Franklin Richards returned to the States, her friend being quite restored to health. By a singular chance the two religious enthusiasts also happened to be on board. The doctor scowled fiercely at them when they put in an appearance, but they took little notice of his black looks. They returned to the attack upon the Amiable Old Lady with renewed vigour.

But my friend Grant did not abandon the field, not he! He did his best to cut out both the Church and the Army. He had one great pull over his rivals owing to the fact that he could advise the old lady as to the proper treatment of her pet—a tiny little toy terrier, which she always carried about with her.

This canine mite was the laughing-stock of the whole ship. It looked for all the world like a fluffy ball of wool, with two little beady eyes peeping out timidly from under the fleecy hair that fell over them. Whenever it got on the ground, it had the queerest habit of scooting away under a seat, or trying to hide itself in some dark corner.

The old lady's attachment for this diminutive creature was something extraordinary. She seemed to regard it

as her greatest treasure, never allowed anyone to touch it, but herself, and was always in a fever if it was out of her sight for a moment.

The Salvation Army man—whose name, by the way, was Coates, bestowed a good deal of notice upon this wretched little creature. He frequently attempted to coax it to him, and endeavoured to stroke it; but whenever he made any advances of this kind, the old lady snatched her pet away at once.

I must confess that I had my doubts about this same gentleman, and was more than half inclined to put him down as an imposter. Oddly enough, there was something about him which struck me as familiar, though I couldn't for the life of me imagine where I had seen him before. More than once I noticed that he gave me a queer sort of look, which I was quite at a loss to understand.

Throughout the entire voyage, up to the very evening we steamed into New York harbour, he never wavered in his attachment to the Amiable Old Lady. Even then, while the passengers were getting ready to disembark, he kept hovering around her, as if on the watch to render her any little service she might stand in need of. The High Church clergyman vied with him in this respect. The anxiety they displayed regarding her was really touching. She could hardly move a step without one or the other of them dangling at her heels.

At last she was ready to go on shore. She took a friendly leave of the doctor—who was rather down in the mouth, poor fellow—and stepped towards the gangway. Coates, who clung to her like a shadow, offered to relieve her of her pet, which was coddled up in her arms. The old lady drew back in alarm. She wouldn't hear of such a thing! What! allow anyone to handle her precious mite but herself? Never!

It was then that a strange, a most surprising thing happened. Before a single soul could interfere, before one of us was aware of his intention even, Coates stretched out his hand, and snatched the creature from the old lady's arms!

My word, what a scene and a fuss there was, to be sure. Mrs. Richards screamed, and seemed to be within an ace of fainting. The High Church clergyman, however, promptly stepped forward, took her by the arm, and led her gently, but firmly away.

As for me, I instantly elbowed my way through the crowd, and the next moment was at Coates' side.

"What is the meaning of this, sir?" I demanded angrily.

"Oh, nothing much," he answered, with a grin, as if it was a remarkably good joke. "Only—I smell a rat!"

"Smell a rat!" I exclaimed. "What the deuce do you mean?"

"Just step across to the custom-house, and you'll learn soon enough."

Something in his tones, and in the altered expression of his face, seemed so strangely familiar that I looked at him more narrowly. Then, and not till then, did the truth dawn upon me.

It was Morse, the detective!

Utterly at a loss to comprehend the meaning of it all, and in a state of mind bordering upon bewilderment, I followed him mechanically to the custom-house. There I found the Amiable Old Lady with a handkerchief to her eyes, as if she was quite overcome. Standing somewhat grimly by her side, with the air of a custodian was the High Church clergyman.

Morse immediately turned his attention to his prize. What he did to it exactly I couldn't quite make out;

but, to my great surprise, my utter amazement, the fluffy skin suddenly came off in his hands, and out popped—a white rat!

He let the creature scuttle away where it pleased, without even turning his head to look after it. He was fully occupied at the moment with the covering in which it had been clothed. And no wonder! For—oh, the deceitfulness of human nature!—the lining of that skin was literally stuffed with diamonds!

"So much for the pet," said the detective, turning to me. "We will leave it to one of the female searchers to work a somewhat similar transformation in Mademoiselle Pauline here."

"What!" I cried. "She is not Mrs. Franklin Richards, then?"

"No more than you are."

"Nor—nor even elderly?" I hazarded.

"Well on the right side of thirty, my dear sir. She is a young lady of French extraction, and one of the most clever adventuresses in Europe. I need not tell you she is a born actress, a remarkably good hand at making up, and as deep as a draw-well. I think, however, she will be compelled to retire from the scene a little while now."

And so, of course, she was. I confess that I found it hard to have my illusion destroyed in this rude manner, for really I had taken quite a fancy to the Amiable Old Lady myself.

It subsequently transpired that the High Church clergyman was none other than one of Morse's fellow detectives. The pair of them having their suspicions aroused regarding the *bona fides* of Mrs. Franklin Richards, had followed her to the Continent, where they found she was regularly employed by dishonest brokers to smuggle diamonds into the States.

In conclusion, may I be permitted to offer a word of advice to the reader? If he should ever take it into his head to visit America, and happen to fall in with Dr. Robert Eustace Grant on board ship, let him beware of touching upon the topic of old ladies and their legacies.

The doctor does not take kindly to the subject.

J. L. HORNIBROOK.

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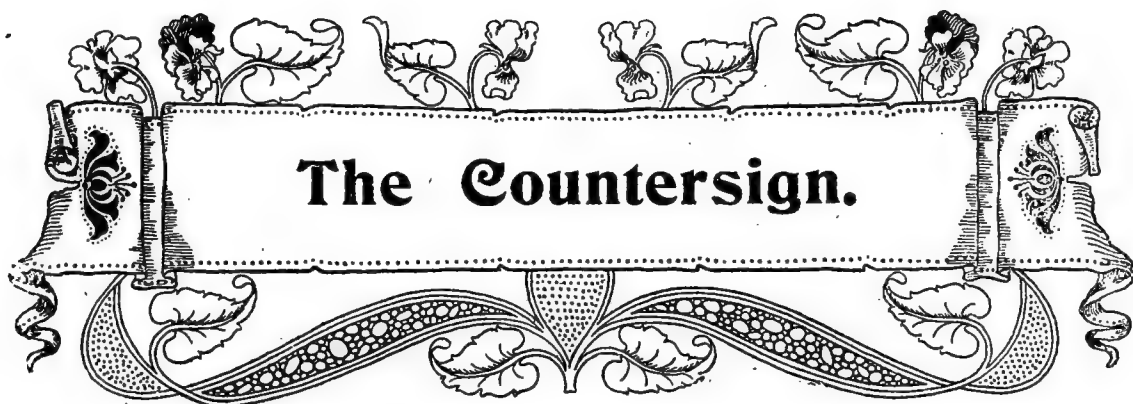
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WHILE my maternal grandfather was commanding the—then—H. E. I. Co's—now—Royal Artillery at St. Thomas' Mount near Madras, there came a time when some disturbance was expected; one of the consequences being the rigid inforcement of rules relating to passwords, countersigns, and such like. Patrols perambulated the cantonment and neighbouring country at all hours of the night and day; one European officer slept at the Quarter Guard of each Native Infantry Regiment at the Mount and at the contiguous stations of Palaveram and Poonamallee; some British gunners at the first named place occupied the Main Guard in addition to the usual *Jemadars* party of Sepoys, and sentries were posted in profusion. But the alarm in due course quietened down, and though precautions were not relaxed, people began to breathe again, and amusements and entertainments were resumed.

One night, Colonel Blundell—my grandfather—and his daughters attended a ball given by the artillery to a popular commander-in-chief, who was on the point of leaving for England.

All went well; the function was a grand success; the Chief made a felicitous speech; dancing was resumed after supper, and the fun grew so fast and furious that the Colonel deemed it prudent to take his daughters home.

Most of the married people had already left, for it was nigh upon two in the morning; rather a late hour for those days.

On the Colonel's carriage being called for however, it did not put in its appearance at the porch, and investigation elicited the fact that the coachman and attendant brace of horsekeepers had emulated the *Dorai marai* (gentlefolks) in their hilariousness, and were all three lying hopelessly drunk! Now, the Colonel or even one of his daughters could have "tooled" the turn out home, or they could have obtained the loan of a conveyance from someone, but as their house was but a ten minutes' walk across the *maidan* or parade ground, the night fine, and the road good, the quartette elected to go on foot,—to the ruin however of the ladies' dancing shoes, which, at that period were of a particularly flimsy build. About half way across the *maidan* stood a magazine; a bomb-proof building, fenced in by a breastwork, and guarded by sepoy sentries,—one on each flank. Here the trouble began. No sooner had the Colonel and his ladies come within the prescribed distance than Jack Sepoy ported his musket and shouted "Hookumdare?" (Who comes there?)

"Friend!" replied Colonel Blundell.

"Bance priend and give the countersign!" (Advance friend, and give the countersign) responded the sentry, his piece still at the port.

Not one of the four knew the countersign, for the custom prevailed—and still does—for the word to be given to the servants; and here they were without a single follower! But the colonel—never an oriental linguist—mustered what little Hindustani he knew, explained their quandary to the sentry, told him who he was, and asked to be allowed to pass.

No, the sentry would not grant the permission.

"Call the *Naique* (Corporal) of the guard," said the Colonel; and on that individual appearing, the officer went over the same ground again; but to no purpose: the N. C. O. was as strict—call it obdurate if you will—as the private; so there they stood; the sentry repeating: "Bance priend and give the countersign," Colonel Blundell as persistently averring his ignorance thereof.

The officer's patience was fast wearing out; he hoped someone would be coming along, and from whom he could learn the word, and thus get free of the dilemma; but no, as fate had it, not a soul happened to be going in that direction. "Don't you know me?" again asked the Colonel, in execrable Hindustani, approaching within a step or two of the N. C. O., "if you disbelieve my words bring a lantern and see; you will find me to be what I told you; the Officer commanding the Artillery." "Sir," replied the *Naique*, "were you the Commander-in-chief himself, you could not pass without giving the countersign; our orders are strict, and we cannot break them," saying which he turned back into the guard room; and the sentry resumed his "Bance priend and give the countersign."

"Countersign be hanged!" roared the exasperated old officer.

"Pass priend and all ees well!" cried the sentry, smartly coming to the shoulder, and permitting the party to proceed,—greatly to their astonishment and satisfaction!

"Butler," asked the Colonel of his *major domo*, as that worthy jumped up to receive his master at the porch, "do you know the countersign for the day?"

"Yes, your honour. 'Penang.'"

At this, the Colonel and his daughters laughed heartily; for it immediately dawned upon them that the officers strong expression as conveyed in the words "be hanged" had sounded in the sentry's ears as "Penang;" an error which they were quite ready to excuse under the circumstances!

H. HERVEY.



Briton & Boer?



By GEORGE GRIFFITH.

INTRODUCTION.

For years past Britain and the Transvaal have been spoiling for a fight, and it was left to that well-known author, Mr. George Griffith, to write this strong and exciting serial nearly four years ago graphically describing a huge war between the two countries.

The story, coming so soon after the Jameson Raid, was read with unusual interest.

Now that Briton and Boer are in deadly conflict it will be interesting to read the story, and see how far the imagination of the author has actually come true.

SUMMARY OF OPENING CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.—The scene opens on the Rand. It is the eve of Amajuba day, and a State ball is being given. To this comes Prince Paul Regna, a Polish nobleman, and his daughter, Princess Vavara. They are introduced to Dr. Leyds.

CHAPTER II.—Dr. Leyds returns to Pretoria to attend a midnight consultation at the Government buildings. The Prince's rooms are in the Grand Hotel opposite. By tapping the wires, which cross the street at this point, the Prince and his daughter overhear all that goes on, and telegraph the result by secret code to Europe.

CHAPTERS III. AND IV.—Amajuba day dawns. The Secretary accompanies the Prince and Princess to Krugersdorp, where, from the base of the Monument of Independence, the President makes a great proclamation. The Convention of London is abrogated; the absolute independence of the South African Republic is declared; the President unfurls a Union Jack and rends it to pieces. So the storm bursts!

CHAPTERS V. AND VI.—On the following day Major-General Carrington learns at Buluwayo that all the wires have been cut between Rhodesia and the south and east. He concludes that this is due to Boer hostility, and prepares to meet it. Meanwhile a powerful British squadron appears unexpectedly in Delagoa Bay, and Lieutenant Ferris is sent ashore to take possession of the telegraph station.

CHAPTERS VII. AND VIII.—A Russian squadron is in the Bay at the same time. The flagship *Nacarin* fires on the British destroyer *Thrasher*. Admiral Dale takes this as an act of war. There is a battle and the Russian squadron is defeated and captured. Michael Ostroff seeks to escape in the *Sokol*. He is taken prisoner, and important dispatches are found in his possession. Admiral Dale calls a council of war.

CHAPTERS IX. AND X.—General Carrington's campaign in the Matopopo Hills ends in the defeat of the rebels, the remnant of whom take refuge in a kopje, which is surrounded. A Rhodesian trooper and a private of Lancers capture a Boer disguised as a Kaffir, and take him into camp.

CHAPTERS XI. AND XII.—The Boer-Kaffir tells General Carrington that the Dutch have risen against British rule all over South Africa. The Matabele surrender, and give up the disguised Boers among them. These are shot. As the force moves southward the scouts are met by a girl, who tells them that the Boers have invaded Rhodesia and are marching on Buluwayo. Meanwhile, Admiral Dale informs the captains of the squadron in Delagoa Bay that no help can be expected from home, and that he intends to take absolute command of the coast.

CHAPTER XIII.

CAPTAIN BRYAN'S COMMISSION.

The trooper into whose arms the fainting girl had fallen was an old grizzled Scotchman named Alan Macpherson. He had been turned out into the world some five-and-twenty years before, by the death of a dearly loved wife and an only child, who had died of scarlet fever within a few hours of each other. This had severed all the home ties he had, and made him a wanderer over the face of the earth, and mostly through the wild places thereof.

Though he was only a year or so on either side of sixty, and probably on the wrong side of it, he had as keen an eye and as steady a hand as could be found in Rhodesia, and there were not many men in the whole force under General

Carrington's command that would have been very keen on shooting against him at long range for level money at a standing or moving target with anything but a Lee-Netford—which he was wont to designate with considerable scorn in his voice as an "unsopheisticated combination of cartridge-box and quick-firing gun that always jammed when a man was in a hot corner."

He gathered the girl up in his arms as tenderly and as deftly as though she had been his own daughter, and then he looked up at his captain and said as quietly as though nothing out of the common had happened:

"Aye, and it's a braw lassie she'll be when she's had a decent bit of caring for, but I'm speerin' we'd best get her back to the column as soon as maybe."

"Well, Mac, I don't think anybody's better qualified to take her than you are, judging by the nice, fatherly way you've got hold of her," said Captain Coope. "Come along, men. Right about. This isn't the sort of news that will stand much keeping; but perhaps you had better give her a taste of this first. Robertson, you take her horse."

As he spoke the captain of the scouts pulled his flask out of the sling and poured a few spoonfuls of brandy and water—which was rather a precious fluid in those days in Matabeleland—into the cup and handed it to Macpherson.

"That's just what she'll be wanting to keep her going till we meet the ambulance, and Nurse Isabel can put her to bed comfortably for an hour or two."

He took the cup and put it to the girl's white drawn lips as tenderly as any woman could have done, just holding her head so that it trickled very slowly into her mouth. She gave a little cough and then a gasp or two,



He gathered the girl in his arms.

opened her eyes wearily, and then, murmuring a few half-articulated words, she shut her eyes again and half turned her head in the hollow of his arm like a child going to sleep.

"That's good now," said the old scout, sitting back in the saddle and arranging her more comfortably. "She's come out of the faint and gone to sleep, and a nice gentle tripple* back to the column will only rock her off sounder."

He let the bridle fall on the neck of his horse—a somewhat sorry-looking structure of bony angles and tight-drawn skin, but for all that one of the easiest goers and best stayers in the country—and sitting well back in the saddle and guiding "old Jeppe"—for such was the name of the Rhodesian Rosinante—with his knees, he followed Captain Coope, who was already cantering away up the road.

The other five members of the scouting party had been ordered to spread themselves out on both sides of the road and to keep a bright look out for Boer scouts or native spies, and to shoot on sight anyone, white or black, who was not coming openly and honestly along the road.

Half-an-hour later they met the advanced guard, which they passed through, followed by the curious glances of every man in it, but giving no further explanation than "Bad news from down yonder. Keep your eyes open and your guns ready," which Scout Macpherson vouchsafed in reply to a score of queries which assailed him as he rode through.

When the main column was reached the old scout took his charge straight to the ambulance corps, and handed her over to the care of the chief of the little band of heroic women who had followed the fortunes of the column, as they had done those of many others during the war through all manner of difficulties and dangers for the sake of doing the best and holiest work that women's hands can find to do.

Captain Coope, meanwhile, went straight to the General and told him the news. Sir Frederick heard it in silence, a silence which he did not break for some moments after the Captain had finished his report. It was one of those occasions upon which a man who is really qualified to command only takes counsel with himself. The decision had to be immediate and, once taken, irrevocable, and hence it was one that only a single mind could make.

Then he looked up and said:

"Well, that's not very good news, but it's only what we expected, and it's better to hear it now than later. Go and find Captain Norman Bryan and send him to me at once, then go to Nurse Isabel and ask her to do all she can to bring the young lady round, if it's only for a few minutes, and let me know when I can have a talk with her. You say she rode across country from Puri?"

"Yes, General."

"Well, I suppose she'll be able to show us the short cut; at least I hope so, or we shall be in a bit of a fix. Well, send Captain Bryan to me as soon as you can find him."

The captain of the scouts saluted and rode away, and presently a well-knit, handsome young fellow, with a face bronzed by many an ardent sun, and sitting his horse with the easy grace of a man who spends more time in the saddle than out of it, cantered up and saluted at a respectful distance. The General quickened his horse up and turned out of the line of march on to a stretch of level grassland beside the road, beckoning to the officer to follow him. When they were alone together he slackened his pace to a walk and said:

"Captain Bryan, I am going to give you a difficult piece of work to do, and if you hadn't served with Gibb in the Soudanese Legion I shouldn't give it to you at all. I have just received news, in a rather curious way, but from quite a reliable source, that the Boers have crossed the border, taken Tuli, and invested Puri, and also that they've sent a detachment out to hold the kopjes between the Sigabi Drift

and Selindila, and are lying in wait for us there, expecting us to march through and let them play the Bronkhorst Spruit game on us again.

"The news was brought by a girl, who says that she has ridden all night across country from Puri to warn us. She fainted just after she said that, and she is now in Nurse Isabel's care, being brought round, I hope. Now from what Gibb told me in the letter you brought from him you ought to know more about leading niggers and showing them how to fight than anyone else that I can spare, so I am going to ask you to take these fellows that surrendered up yonder in hand, with about a hundred good white men who understand the work, and hunt those Boers out of the kopjes. You can have a Maxim and 30,000 rounds, but the niggers must drag it, for I can't spare any animals. We shall want them all to get the other guns across to Puri. You'll probably want it, for I hear the Boers have got one. You will have to use your own discretion absolutely, and the fewer you let away the better for you and everybody concerned. Now, what do you think about it?"

"Well, sir, from what I know of the ground, the Boers will probably think that with about five hundred men they can hold the five or six miles of road that runs between the hills against the whole column, and if they have their Maxim well placed they may expect to cut us up altogether. Am I right in supposing that you intend to take the column across country to Puri?"

"Certainly I shall, if the young lady who brought the information tells me the country is practicable, as I suppose it is, if she was able to ride across in the night, for it is quite fifty miles from here."

"Very well, sir; then, granting that that can be done, I shall propose to throw out a line of scouts with a few white men to look after them between your line of march and the Bulye, so as to cut off any that the Boers may be sending out, and keep them in the dark as to your change of route. Then when you had passed they would work down through the bush to the westward of the kopjes, and I should draw all the rest off the road with the exception of four hundred or so, which I should send right down the road—"

"What to be shot down?" said the General a trifle sharply. "That's rather rough isn't it, even on niggers, and granted they have been rebels?"

"Pardon me, General," said Bryan with a smile. "I hadn't quite explained myself. What I intended to do was to send a troop of about five hundred Matabele under old Umzilizi down the road to tell the Boers that they'd eaten up the whole column in the Matoppes, and that only a few stragglers were getting back to Buluwayo."

"Meanwhile, the rest of us—I suppose we should be over a thousand strong—would work round to the eastward and southward of the kopjes, cut them off from the Drift, and when it got dark enough to spoil their shooting, go in and hunt them out with cold steel. You know the Boers hate night-fighting just as they do cold steel."

"Captain Bryan, I apologise," said the General, bluntly yet kindly. "After that I give you *carte blanche*. Do exactly as you please. If anyone can turn them out I think you can, and what's more, I believe you've struck the key-



Nurse Isabel met them.

* The South African term for pacing as distinguished from trotting.

note of the whole war in what you have just said. 'Night attacks and cold steel.' That's it, and never use the rifle except at close quarters. The bullet and then the bayonet, that's what these beggars want, skulking behind their stones. Now, we'd better go and find Nurse Isabel and see

how the patient is going on. Then you can get your men together and get to work as soon as you like."

When they reached the ambulance waggon Nurse Isabel met them with the welcome information that the young lady was sleeping quietly and might be awakened for a few minutes without danger, so the waggon was stopped and



He leant over into the waggon.

the nurse raised the tent-flap and laid her hand lightly on the shoulder of the girl, who was lying on a mattress just inside.

The hardy constitution of the pioneer's daughter had carried her through the terrible experiences of the last few days and the fatigue of the long-night ride with no worse consequences than the naturally intense drowsiness that had followed her brief fainting fit, but the stoppage of the waggon, combined with a gentle shake from the nurse, roused her, and as she rose on her elbow and rubbed her eyes with the other hand, Bryan, who had dismounted, suddenly started forward past the General and said, with a quick catch in his voice:

"Good Heavens, Madge, is it *you* who brought the news? I thought you'd gone home long ago."

"Why, Norrie, are you here? Oh, I'm so glad—but it's no use—you've come too late. They're all dead, every one of them but me. Why couldn't you come before? Oh, I'm so sleepy. Where am I? Have I found the column?"

She spoke in the dreamy, half-conscious way of one who is still on the borderland between sleeping and waking, and looked about her with drowsy, inquiring eyes.

"So you're old friends, eh?" said the General kindly, putting his hand on Bryan's shoulder as he staggered back as though he had received a blow. "Well, that's bad news for you to hear on your first meeting, but it's the fortune of war, and anyhow, if you're too late to save, you're not too late to make the blackguards pay for it."

"And I'll do it, too," said Bryan between his clenched teeth. "If any of them get out of these kopjes alive you may hang me, General."

Then he leant over into the waggon and took the girl's outstretched hand and went on:

"Yes, Madge, you've found the column. The scouts brought you in about half-an-hour ago, and this is General Carrington himself. He wants to ask you about the road you came by. Can you remember, and are you well enough to understand him?"

"Oh, yes," she said, sitting up on the mattress. "There is nothing the matter with me except that I'm very tired and very miserable. What can I tell you, sir?"

"At present all I want to know," said the General, "is whether I could take the waggons and guns to Puri by the way you came, and whether you could guide us there when you've had a good long sleep, and Nurse Isabel has done all she can to make you comfortable?"

"Yes, sir, I think you could. Of course there isn't any road, only a Kafir track part of the way, but the bush isn't

thick and the rivers are nearly dry. Of course I can show you the way, but you'll have to be very careful, for the Boers are all round the township, and they'll have their scouts out everywhere. I don't know how I got away myself, but I suppose they thought they'd killed us all."

"It's a good job for you and for us that you did," said the General. "Do you think you could give me any idea of how many there are—or, no, we had better leave that until you've had a good sleep."

"I'm afraid I can't tell you very nearly, sir," she answered, drawing her hand across her brow, "but I heard them saying at the farm that there must have been over two thousand of them from the firing that was going on all round the township. They were fighting all yesterday and the day before, but they couldn't get near the Laager because of the Maxims. Then my youngest brother rode into the farm yesterday afternoon and said that he had seen nearly a thousand of them going along the Buluwa road. That's just before he was shot, poor fellow. He was standing beside me when the bullet came—"

"Don't distress yourself about that, my dear, now," said the General a trifle huskily. "Try and go to sleep again. I'm sorry I've had to rouse you up when you wanted sleep so badly, but you've told me all I require to know for the present. I shall come and see you again in six hours, and you, Nurse, must see that she's not disturbed on any account till then, unless, of course, you want to give her anything. But I needn't tell you what to do—you know a great deal better than I do. Now then, Bryan, say good-bye for the present and come and have another talk with me. You shall see her again before you start."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MATABELLE LEGION.

"I don't want to pry into anything of a private nature, Bryan," said the General when they had remounted and got out of earshot of the ambulance waggon, "but I must say I should like to know how you and this young lady got to know each other. It is certainly curious that you should meet just in this way, almost at the moment you're getting ready to go and take your share in avenging the murder of her people."

"It's very simple, General, and there's nothing to conceal about it," the young man replied with a slightly deepened colour in his brown cheeks. "Her name is Margaret Morrison, in full, although she is never called anything but Madge. Her people and mine are, or rather, I am sorry to say, were, East Anglians, and her brother Fred—poor chap, he's dead now, of course—was my particular chum at the Colonial College, Hollesley Bay.

"We were learning to be farmers there, but fighting came more in my line, though Fred stuck to farming and came out here with his people as soon as he'd finished his course, and he's been farming and I've been fighting for the last six or seven years, and he's got a bullet into him first, poor chap, after all. It was through him that I got to know the rest of the family, and, to put it plainly, it was through Madge that I came out here when the Soudan business was over."

"Ah, I see," said the General, smiling albeit somewhat gravely. "Well, Bryan, you've got plenty of hard and risky work in front of you, like the rest of us, but, of course, that's what we came here for. Still, I like you, and from what I've seen of you so far I believe you'll do it well; and if you do you'll get on, or it won't be my fault that you don't. I hope you'll be as fortunate in war as I think you have been and will be in love. I shall make it my business to see that Miss Morrison is properly looked after until things cool down a bit, and after that I suppose you won't have any objection to taking care of her. No, don't trouble about any thanks just now. You'll have to earn her before you get her, I expect, and now I'll tell you how I am going to put you in the way of doing it."



It was hardly what could have been called a 'lovers' interview.'

Captain Norman Bryan felt that something good was coming, and for the moment the sadness which had overwhelmed him on hearing the awful fate that had befallen his sweetheart's family gave way to the pleasurable anticipation which the General's words had inspired him with both as a lover and a soldier. He pulled himself up straighter than ever in the saddle and looked at Sir Frederick with a bright light kindling in his grey-blue eyes.

"You know," the General went on, "there is a good deal of sentimental nonsense talked about white people employing niggers, or other coloured people, to fight against other whites, but personally I can't see where it comes in. If we



You'll take brevet rank as major from to-day.

were to fight Russia, for instance, in Asia we should make plenty of use of the Sikhs and the Gourkhas, and that would be taken as a matter of course, and so I don't see why we shouldn't turn the fighting qualities of these Matabeles to advantage, especially considering how enormously we seem to be outnumbered.

"Now your experience under Gibb with the Soudanese Legion should make you just the man to manage these fellows, and so I am going to give you command of them and the troopers I have attached to them. You'll take brevet rank as Major from to-day and full rank when we get to Bulawayo, if ever we do. I shall hold you responsible for their drill and efficiency, and of course you'll have full power to lick them into shape as you think fit. There is no reason why you shouldn't do as well with them in this war as Gibb did with the Legion in the Soudan. Now how does that strike you?"

"It is the very thing of all others, General, that I should have wished for, and I'm sure I needn't tell you how grateful I am to you; but I hope to show you before long. Now that these fellows have had a good licking and know their master, they'll be as loyal as any of us, and it'll be my fault if they don't make themselves a terror to these Dutchmen before long."

"That's just what I think and hope. If ever a man had good reasons for hard fighting you have," said the General warmly, "and I expect the Boers will love you about as much as they love me before they are many weeks older. By-the-way, I've heard that you're a bit of an inventive genius. Is that so?"

"I'm afraid I can't answer for the 'genius' part of it, Sir Frederick," the newly-made Major replied modestly enough and yet with a ring of pleasure in his voice; "but I have thought out one or two little things that might be useful in tackling these Dutchmen, and, of course, I shall be only too pleased to lay them before you when you have time to consider them. Meanwhile—"

"Yes," interrupted the General, looking sharply round at

him; "have you got a rod in pickle for these gentry down among the kopjes?"

"I think so, Sir Frederick," was the quiet answer, "but, of course, it's only in the experimental stage yet. Still, if you could let me have a couple of dozen rockets, and twice as many four-ounce charges of dynamite, I think I may be able to make things rather uncomfortable for them."

"Humph! Rockets and dynamite! That's rather a curious mixture," said the General. "However, I've no doubt you know what you're talking a-out, and I think I've an idea what you are driving at. Take what you want. I'll tell the quartermaster to supply you. Now, about men. Are there any that you'd particularly like to take with you? I know a man can always work better with men that he chooses himself, and this business that you're going on is too important not to be done well. You are going to strike the first blow; so far as we're concerned, and it must be a staggerer."

Major Bryan was silent for a moment or two, and then he said:

"That's very kind of you, General. There are one or two that I should like to take with me. There's old Macpherson of the Scouts for one. He is just the sort of man I want. Then there are those two Cockneys, Dempsey and Hinton, in the 'K' troop. They're both capital shots, and as sharp as needles. I suppose it wouldn't be possible for me to have Anson of the Lancers?"

"Oh, yes," said the General. "I'll speak to Colonel Francis about that. You can take him as your orderly. Anyone else?"

"Well, I'm afraid you'll think me greedy, but I should like to have Jackson Bethell, that big Yankee in the Rhodesian Horse, with me, though perhaps it's asking too much to want the best shot in the Column—except yourself, General."

"Don't try to be too polite, Bryan," laughed Sir Frederick. "I know Bethell very well, and he can give me a hundred yards and a beating any time, and I'm not sure that you couldn't do the same. However, you may have him for the present, for you'll want some good shots. Is that all?"

"That's all, thank you, General, and about enough too, I should think. If I don't get through all right, it won't be for want of means."

"Very well then, and now I'll halt the column for breakfast and get your orders out. When you've fed, you can set to and get things in order. We shan't move again for a few hours for I want the men to have a good rest, and the animals to get a good feed, because we shall have to march all night to-night and so will you, and we may as well do it here where we've got the water. If anything else strikes you let me know at once. We shall move again about three o'clock."

"Very well, sir, everything shall be ready by then as far as I'm concerned," replied Major Bryan as he saluted, and rode off to begin his new duties forthwith.

His feelings were a curious mixture of sorrow and pleasure, combined with something very like exultation. He knew that the chance of his life had come—the chance to make a reputation and a name in a line of work in which he would have no rival. More than that, too, he would win an honest and legitimate revenge—vengeance for the awful calamity that had befallen the girl he would willingly have risked his life to save from the slightest sorrow—and, more than that, the opportunity would soon come for him to wipe out some of the old grudges that every Englishman worthy of the name could not but have in his heart against the Boers, until the long-standing scores that dated from Bronkhurst Spruit and Amajuba Hill had been paid up in full with due interest.

He felt that it might well fall to him to take a good share in proving to the arrogant and insolent Dutchmen that there were other colours on the English flag than white, and that they were not as invincible, even behind their

favourite rock-fortresses, as they thought themselves at Lang's Nek and Doornkop.

He was not only an intrepid soldier and a man of ready decision and resource, he was also, as the General had said, a bit of an inventive genius. He had studied the Boer methods of warfare for years, and had thought out not a few devices which he would soon have the best of chances for putting into practice, as he hoped, at their expense.

Singularly enough, too, the formation of a Matabele Legion on the lines of the Soudanese Legion had been in his mind ever since he had first seen their excellent fighting qualities, and recognised how useful and powerful an arm they might become if properly led by British officers, and now here he was just about to take command of them. Certainly it seemed that the ball was at his feet, and it was within the bounds of possibility that the end of the war might see him hailed as one of the saviours of the sorely threatened British Empire in Africa.

There is little need to say that he lost no time in making the necessary preparations for entering upon his new command. He reported himself to Colonel Beale, who until his conversation with the General had been his commanding officer, and was heartily congratulated when he told him the story of his promotion, for he was one of the most popular men in the column.

When Troopers Dempsey and Hinton, whose flesh wound was now healing fast, and Private Anson were informed of their good fortune they congratulated each other with a wealth of expression thoroughly characteristic of the city of their origin, and anything but complimentary or encouraging to those whom they were presently to meet in battle, and Trooper Hinton swore with eloquent profuseness that he hoped he might leave the world with half a hundred-weight of lead in his body if he didn't win the stripe that had been given to his two chums for their little adventure with the Kaffir-Dutchman.

Sergeant Alan Macpherson of the Scouts took the news more quietly, but with no less satisfaction, and Corporal Jackson P. Bethell of the Rhodesian Horse concluded that it was "just about the best piece of news he'd heard since he'd left God's country on the other side," and modestly informed all and sundry who cared to listen that "those darned white niggers down yonder wanted a few lessons in tall shooting, and it wouldn't be long before he'd be around to instruct them."

He was a typical New Englander, tall, and somewhat lank, but hard as a nail, and a good deal braver than the so-called king of beasts, for whom, by-the-way, he had a sincere and well-founded contempt, as the following well-authenticated anecdote will show.

He was an ardent snap-shooter—in fact there was only one thing he liked using better than his camera, and that was his rifle—and once when he was out on a hunt in the Mazoe country he put a bullet into a lion at about four hundred yards, reloaded his rifle, set his shutter, and calmly took a snap-shot of the wounded beast as it was coming towards him. Then he put the camera down, picked up his rifle, and shot the lion dead when it was within thirty yards of him.

It was true that no one saw him do it, but there was the photograph, and Jackson P. Bethell was not the sort of man that anyone would light-heartedly call a liar, at least not while he was within hearing.

The time occupied by the halt was naturally a pretty busy one for Major Norman Bryan, but when the bugles sounded at half-past two he had got everything in readiness for his night's adventure.

Shortly before the column moved, Nurse Isabel relieved his very natural anxiety by sending him a message to say that Miss Morrison was awake and ready to see him when he could find time—which happened the instant that he received the message.

It was hardly what could have been called a lovers'

interview, though in one sense it was infinitely more tender than such meetings commonly are, standing as they did in the shadow of a terrible sorrow, and at the beginning of a time of constant peril for one, and it might be for both; for none knew better than Madge Morrison, with her six years of pioneer life, that her lover was entering upon a much more serious business than kaffir fighting.

He was going to meet enemies who again and again had proved themselves practically invincible in their own kind



He was heartily congratulated when he told of his promotion.

of warfare. She knew that although the so-called infallible aim of the Boers had been greatly overrated, yet, taking them as a fighting force, they were infinitely superior in marksmanship to any other people in the world—and who could tell when or where a well-directed bullet from behind a stone might end at once the love-dream of her own girlhood, and all the hopes and projects of his opening manhood?

There was not much time for lovers' dalliance between them, for the sterner work in hand had to be begun forthwith; but in such moments as those much may be said in few words, and for Norman Bryan everything was said between their last kiss and their last hand-pressure in one little sentence.

"Good-bye, dearie, we shall meet at Puri or not at all, but if we do you'll know that the Dutchmen have paid life for life and a good deal more for what they did at the farm."

Within an hour the two forces had parted. The main column under General Carrington struck north-westward up the valley of the Umzingwani to make its way through the bush country in two detachments to the north and south of Puri, flanked to the southward by a long chain of native scouts, to cut off any wandering Boers that might be inclined to spy upon their movements, while the Matabele Legion, divided into squads of a hundred natives and half-a-dozen white troopers, disappeared from the road and vanished into the bush country on both sides, leaving Umzilizi to march with his three hundred men openly into the heart of the Boer stronghold among the kopjes, to tell their tale of the eating up of the white army under the Mighty Lion.

To make their story look more plausible, they had been given a Maxim—the lock of which was safe in Major Bryan's pocket—and this they dragged gaily along the road, rehearsing the story of its alleged capture, with which their wary old leader proposed to entertain the Boers, together with many other romances concerning the possible prisoners and loot that were coming on behind them to be shared with the good friends who had taught them how to overcome their enemies.

As it was little more than a dozen miles from where the column separated to where the kopjes began, and as a good three hours of daylight still remained, there was ample time for Major Bryan's preliminary arrangements to be thoroughly carried out, and the result was that, through good luck and good management, the sun had hardly set when every squad had got into position round the kopjes without having seen or been seen by a single Boer.

(To be continued.)

SHORT STORIES ABOUT PEOPLE.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humorous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 is. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of Allen Upward's "Athelstone Ford" to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source must be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. Jas. G. Macpherson, Milton Road, Portobello, N.B. Attempts for this week's prize may deal with ANY SUBJECT and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, April 2nd. Post-cards only, please.

The Wrong Motive.

AN officer of a Volunteer company insisted upon the members of his company saluting him wherever they met, whether in uniform or not.

When walking along the street of the village one day he saw a private in plain clothes approaching.

Just before they reached the same point the private turned into the inn, and the officer in passing the door reached forward and tapped the man on the shoulder.

The private looked round, and gave his head a shake, saying:

"I canna; I've only three bawbees!"

J. G. M.

The Centre of Gravity.

Two urchins of about eleven and twelve years respectively were going by Chelsea Barracks, when one of them stopped in front of a very tall soldier on sentry duty. Calling to his mate, the lad said with bated breath:

"Just look at 'is feet, Bill! Ain't they a size?"

Bill, in that tone of contempt which comes of superior knowledge, replied:

"A co'ise they is! Don't yer know w'y that is?"

"No, and no more do you!"

"Yus, I does. Don't yer see, if 'is feet wasn't bloomin' yards 'is centre of graverty 'ud fall abtside of 'em, and 'e'd overbalance hisself. It's just like the Heffel Tower what teacher was a-tellin' us abaht!"

C. R. F.

A Strategist.

ROBINSON (looking on): "Bad news from the front, Smith. British surrounded and many prisoners taken."

Smith (from interior of his fowl-run, which he is repairing): "What, more blundering stupidity? Well, upon my soul, it takes the cake! What with this idiotic War Office and the sweet simplicity of our generals, we are becoming the laughing stock of all Europe!" (savagely nails up last lath). "How the dickens any body of intelligent men with eyes in their heads can get themselves caged up in this extraordinary way beats me altogether!"

Robinson: "I say, old man, how are you going to get out of that fowl-run?"

Smith: "Eh, what? Get out? Great Scott! I haven't fenced myself right in, have I?"

D. M.

Fate was Hard.

A CHAPLAIN was paying a visit to the wounded men in a field hospital recently, when he came to a soldier who was groaning loudly.

"Come, my poor fellow," said the chaplain, "try and bear the pain like a man. It's no use kicking against fate."

"Bedad, you're roight, sorr," said the sufferer, who had been severely kicked by a transport mule, "specially when they're the fate av an army mule!"

W. B.

Sarcastic.

A TROOP of Yeomanry for the Cape were passing through a certain town on their way to drill.

Two street boys were playing in the gutter, and one of them looking up and seeing them, said to his companion:

"I say, Bill, I'm goin' wif 'em to pick up some coppers."

"Pick up coppers," said Bill in surprise. "Yer can't pick up coppers when they be drilling."

"Yes, I can," said the other; "they allays want some-one to 'old their 'osses when they draws swords."

W. J.

The Ears Did It.

A PARISIAN swell recently had a crayon picture of himself made, which he afterwards pretended to find fault with.

"It does not bear the slightest resemblance to me," he said, "and I will not take it."

The artist protested, but all to no avail. "All right, sir," he remarked finally, "if it don't look at all like you, of course I can't reasonably expect to get paid for it."

After the dandy had left, the painter added to the portrait a magnificent pair of ass's ears and exhibited it in a window, thus altered, to the gaze of the curious public.

It had not been long so exposed when the dandy rushed into the artist's studio in a towering rage, and finding that threats amounted to nothing, he at last offered to buy it even at a considerable advance upon the original price.

"It wasn't strange you didn't recognise your resemblance to the picture at first," said the painter, "but I knew you'd notice the likeness as soon as I added those ears."

P. T.

It Was Thin.

TWO men went to see a friend off at the station for the front.

After they had seen him depart they went into a refreshment room to have some sandwiches.

One of them, seeing the waiter cutting the ham about as thin as paper, said:

"I know a better game than that."

"What's that?" the waiter asked.

"Why, have it photographed on."

C. H.

She was Disappointed.

A LORD was the guest of honour at a dinner at a private house. A little girl, the daughter of the host, eyed the guest curiously, and soon ventured to remark:

"Are you really and truly a lord?"

"Yes," he replied pleasantly, "really and truly."

"I have often thought that I should like to see a lord," she went on, "and—and——"

"And now you are satisfied at last," he interrupted, laughingly.

"N-no," replied the truthful little maiden; "I'm not satisfied—I'm a good deal disappointed." N. B.

Wiped Out with Blood.

A COUPLE of good-natured Frenchmen got into a quarrel and challenged each other to fight. On the morning of the duel they and their seconds tramped through the woods to the fatal spot, when one of the duellists, the challenging party, tripped and fell.

His second helped him to his feet. "I hope you are not hurt?" said the other duellist.

"I'm not much hurt; I only bumped my nose on the ground."

"Does it bleed?"

"Yes, a little."

"Heaven be praised! Blood flows, and my honour is vindicated. Give me your hand, old boy." H. E.

It Had to be Done.

WHEN Private Cotter had been a few days at drill as a recruit, the sergeant in charge of the squad had reason one morning to reprimand him for moving in the ranks.

"Put your hands down," he cried, "and keep them to your sides."

Cotter did so, but soon, forgetting the order, was again checked for unsteadiness.

"You must not move, sir, or lift a finger while at drill. If I have occasion to warn you again I'll cram you into the mill."

A sort of hornet now perched on Cotter's nose, which, in the course of its peregrinations, performed a variety of evolutions that made the recruit uneasy. With the persecution of the little pest he bore up manfully, till his patience at last was exhausted; and, not daring to move, rebuked as he had been for unsteadiness, he announced the inconvenience to the sergeant.

"Silence," interrupted the sergeant, losing temper, and shaking his cane; "you must neither speak nor move in the ranks. Do it but once again, and I'll take means to cure you."

"If I'm not to move or speak," roared Cotter, angrily, "come yourself, then, and knock this blessed fly off my nose." W. M. A.

Wellington on the Morning of the Battle of Salamanca.

WHEN Sir John Steel, the sculptor, had the "Iron Duke" sitting for a statue, he tried, so it is recorded, to induce him to look warlike. All his efforts were in vain, however, for Wellington seemed, judging by his face, never to have heard of Waterloo or Talavera.

At last, Sir John lost his patience.

"As I am going to make this statue of your Grace," he exclaimed, "can you tell me what you were doing before, say, the Battle of Salamanca?"

"Were you not galloping about the field, cheering on your men to deeds of valour by words and actions?"

"Bah!" said the Duke in evident scorn; "if you really want to model me as I was on the morning of Salamanca, then do me crawling along a ditch on my stomach with a telescope in my hand."

M. E.

Beaten.

AN army officer was entertaining a party of friends to dinner, and among them was a civilian who was an entertaining story-teller, but very reckless in his statements.

On one occasion he told of his being off the Cape of Good Hope in an Indian when a floating object was discovered, which proved to be a cask, whereon a man was seated clinging to a small staff in the bunghole. Of course he was invited to come aboard, but he refused and said:

"I'm very comfortable here. I'm bound for the Cape. Can I take letters there for you?"

Amid the silence which followed this incredible yarn a grey-headed colonel arose and said gravely:

"For years I have been trying to find someone belonging to that ship to return thanks for the kindness shown me on that occasion. At last I am enabled to do so. Sir, I was the man on that cask!"

W. E. T.

Why He Rose Hurriedly.

AT an entertainment in Dublin a thought-reader boasted that he could find a marked pin hid by one of the audience.

Several of them came forward, among whom was a confederate.

The pin was hidden by a Trinity student in an adjoining room, in the presence of the committee, among whom was the confederate.

The student, suspecting the man from his looks, slyly took away the pin from its hiding-place.

On the return to the platform the thought-reader gazed into the hider's face, and putting his hand to his brow, was blindfolded, and led the student to the hiding-place, but, of course, could find no pin.

He returned, acknowledging his defeat, and looking daggers at the confederate.

"Now, gentlemen," said the student, "I'll undertake to say that if this 'diviner of the human mind' will do as I tell him, half the audience, without a single hint from me, will know where the pin is," and turning to the thought-reader, he said, "Sit down."

He did so. There was a yell, and, jumping up, the thought-reader hastily pulled from his coat-tails the marked pin.

W. E.



By a curious chance the following narratives have all come into my hands. I shall not attempt to explain them. If there is anything to read between the lines the reader can find it as well as I.

I.—THE STORY OF SERGT. RICHARD BRAND, 1st DEESHIRE RIFLES.

It is not for me to discuss the why and wherefore of the Stormberg disaster. Our colonel has given his account, and whatever he says, I say.

But my subsequent escape was due to a leader whose voice is silenced, and so it is left to me to tell the tale.

My individual story began with a breach of discipline, the first in my career. When the order to retreat was given my blood was up, and I would not hear it, and none of my men reminded me, but kept on blazing at the little puffs of smoke by the boulders.

These were all we could see of the Boers. The little puffs kept growing in numbers and spreading round us, and drawing nearer, and my men kept falling one by one.

"Look here, boys," I said at last, "it's one of two things: either run and take our chance, or hoist the white flag. I don't think any of us have a rag the right colour for that, eh?"

"That's so, sergeant," they said, and some of them grinned.

"Each on his own, then," I told them. "I've shown you how to tell the way by the sun. God bless you, my lads. You've done your best. Run!"

Away they went, while I sat down behind a bank for the first Boer who came along to pot me. It was no more than I deserved for disobeying orders.

I waited an hour, doing what I could for the poor chaps who were wounded. Then I saw some Boers coming with stretchers, and changed my mind. Something seemed to whisper that I had a wife and two kiddies to think of at home.

So I made off through the bush unobserved. I was

half inclined to have a shot at them, but I saw that they were attending to my wounded, so I couldn't.

I kept seeing Boers searching for any Englishman who had not fled, and expected every moment that they would discover me, but they did not.

Twice some came within a few yards, but crouching down in the long grass I escaped notice. I ate a few biscuits that I had, and drank all my water. Then I got so hungry that I almost made up my mind to give myself up, when I heard a voice in my ear say sharply, "No!"

I started and looked round, for it sounded like the voice of my wife; but there was no one to be seen. However, I decided to wait till it grew dark and try my luck. The chances, I was aware, were against me, for I knew nothing of the country, though I could tell the direction in which our camp lay.

Soon after I fell asleep. We had been marching all night and were dead beat before the fight began.

I woke up thinking that someone was shaking me by the shoulder.

"It is time," the voice said—my wife's soft voice.

I jumped up, rubbing my eyes; but no one was near. However, I stretched my stiff limbs and commenced to run.

When I had taken a few steps in the direction of the camp, I seemed to feel a hand pushing me down. I cowered in the long grass, and listened intently. I heard horse-steps coming nearer and nearer, and soon a Boer patrol rode close by.

Instinctively I raised my rifle, but it seemed drawn away by unseen hands. When they were almost out of hearing I stumbled forward again, looking round every few moments for the invisible presence that had guided me and seeing nothing.

It was mere fancy I told myself. The excitement

had upset my nerves. Yet at the foot of the hill I heard my wife tell me to make a circuit to the right, and obeyed.

Twice more she seemed to warn me to seek cover; and after each warning a party of the enemy passed by.

At last I made my way through a valley between tall hills, and the moon came out so that I could see my way; but I had to proceed with increased caution, since the enemy could now see me.

After wandering for an hour, I came to a brushwood thicket, and went carefully along a narrow track. In the gloom I was less occupied by thought of enemies and began to ponder upon my strange warnings.

My wife was dangerously ill, I knew. Could it be that I had received a message from the dead? I came to a sudden stop.

If she was gone, they might take me. What did I care? Then I heard the voice again.

"The children—our children!" it said.

I felt swiftly round me in the dark. There was nothing. I wiped the sweat from my brow and walked slowly on.

Presently the bushes grew lower and scantier, so that my head would be visible above them. The moon threw long shades that seemed full of lurking foes, and I trembled at my own shadow as it stole along.

The Boers sent out scouts every night in all directions, I knew. Would the voice warn me again? Upon the heels of the thought it sounded in my ears.

"In front! There! Hide!"

I crouched behind a bush and watched. After a time I detected two figures behind a big tree. After half-an-hour I heard them exchange a few words in hoarse, guttural tones. After another half-hour they spoke again. I grew so impatient that I thought of firing at them and taking my chance, but I was under some mysterious restraint.

After another half hour they began to walk toward me. I grasped my rifle tightly and took aim at one of them.

"Don't fire," said the voice, but I would not listen. When they were within ten yards I fired. One fell and the other disappeared in the thicket. In an instant the wood seemed alive with armed men. Half a dozen shots were fired. I could hear the bullets whistle by.

"Run!" cried the voice, and I ran, with tongues of flame darting out from every side. An unseen hand was guiding me; and at last, when I was almost exhausted, the firing ceased; but still the invisible guide urged me on. Suddenly foes appeared in front.

"Quick," cried the voice. "The left path." I ran as fast as my heavy legs would let me. I heard a shot, and I thought it was followed by a woman's scream and a fall. I could see no one. It must be fancy. So I pressed on till I came out upon an open plain. Then I reeled and fell unconscious.

When I recovered the moon was shining brightly, and there was no sign of an enemy. I rose and staggered on in the direction of the camp. Presently the sun sprang up, but I never paused, except to drink at a pool of water by the way. My heart began to drum, and my head whirled round. Then I met a mounted picket, and they carried me to the camp.

A month later I heard that my wife—dear little wife of mine—died at the hour of my return. I listen still for her voice in my ear; but I listen in vain.

II.—THE STORY OF PAUL KRONEN, OF THE TRANSVAAL ARMY.

The night after the Lord had granted us our glorious victory at Stormberg, I was in the woods to the S.W. on the look-out for any straggling red-necks who might pass that way. I had waited for many hours when I heard shots to the north, first one, and then many.

Soon an English soldier came running, with heavy, lagging steps and laboured breath, down the path in front of me.

It may have been that I was disordered by long watching, but it seemed to me that a strange shadow ran beside him, reminding me of the red-necks who fight in petticoats, only smaller.

I rubbed my eyes and hesitated a moment. Then I saw that my duty was clear, for what availeth a shadow? And the issue of all things is surely the will of the Lord.

So I stepped out a pace or so and took steady aim.

As I was about to fire, the red-neck swerved suddenly towards a little path to the left. I covered his broad back, and, when I was quite sure of my aim, I fired.

As I pulled the trigger the shadow, which seemed to have grown into reality, sprang between us. The following instant it threw up its arms, staggered, cried with a woman's cry, and fell. The moonlight shone on its face; and it was the face of an Englishwoman, beautiful to behold. I stood turning cold like a stone, with horror at the thing that I had done.

As I gazed I saw the colour fade out of the cheeks and the lips go white. Over the heart there grew larger and larger a purple-red stain. The red-neck had left his woman and fled. Had he stayed, he might have shot me unchallenged for the deed that I had done.

Then it seemed fitting that I should go to the woman and render such help as might be. So I pushed my way through the brambles, and leapt the little ditch, and came to the place where she had fallen. And behold, there was no woman there! Nor upon the grass was there any stain of red, only the cold night dew.

Truly my sight had deceived me, as I might have known. For these red-necks, though fools, are brave. It is not within belief that one of them would leave his woman to die. Belike my senses played me false altogether, and there was no soldier at all. The Lord alone knows, who disposes all things things well!

III.—THE STORY OF EDWARD GRANT, M.R.C.S.

Every doctor has to treat cases which he cannot fully understand. Occasionally he meets one which does not even appear to admit of explanation; or at most suggests an enveloping world of mystery, from which science cannot lift the veil. The case of Mary Brand was such. Looked at professionally it was a case of valvular disease of the heart, in a severe and painful but normal form.

Her strange fancies may have been merely the delusions of a neurotic patient, suffering from a disease likely to aggravate them. But this is merely the absence of explanation after all.

Her complaint, which was of long standing, became aggravated after her husband's departure with his regiment for South Africa; and some three weeks later she commenced to suffer from the delusions. She would also fall for long periods into a sleep so heavy as almost to resemble the hypnotic trance.

At times I suspected some past history of hypnotism or mesmerism; but this she denied. About five weeks

after Sergeant Brand's departure the delusions became frequent, and took complete hold of her. She believed that she had visited her husband in her sleep, and had seen what he and his comrades were doing. She described the preparations for hostilities, and the military movements in a very realistic manner; and upon several occasions she certainly gave details which appeared to be corroborated by reports appearing later in the papers. Upon my asking her if her husband was aware of her presence she said "No." If there was an hypnotic influence at work I am clear that it was not his.

Upon the evening of December 9th, I found her heart trouble much increased, and her pulse greatly quickened. She had been to South Africa again, she said, and found that General Gatacre's army, in which Sergeant Brand was serving, was about to make a night attack upon the enemy. She was sure, though she could not tell how, that it was doomed to failure.

I administered a strong sedative to calm her, and when I paid a second visit later she had fallen into a heavy sleep.

She remained in this sleep all the next day. When she woke the morning after (the 11th) the heart trouble had further increased, and she could only speak in gasps, but she insisted on talking, and this is what she told me:

"I have saved him, doctor. Saved my dearie! Saved him! I couldn't give my life really, only the few days that I had to give. I gave them, doctor. You don't believe me, but I know it.

"They went the way I told you. You will see it all in the paper. Tramp, tramp! Rattle of guns and carriages. Sometimes dark. Sometimes moonlight. Great hills all round them. All so silent. Dick's hand on my little locket; the children's hair and mine. I was beside him all the way, but he did not know it. He wasn't afraid, doctor—not afraid, only thinking of us.

"Then it was morning. They were hungry and tired.

Dragging themselves slowly along. Listless eyes. Great mountains all round them. They began climbing up one. It looked so quiet and innocent. They did not see the enemy there; but I knew! I tried to tell Dick, but he could not hear. Suddenly, out shot little tongues of fire all over the hill, and our men began to fall—the officers fastest.

"Come round this way. Work up under the stones and bushes," shouted my man. "I was holding his hand, but he could not feel me. Then the bugles sounded the retreat, but he would not hear them—my brave man! But one by one they fell—Ah! At last he told the rest to run, and they ran. He did not run, but stayed to help the wounded. Then he sat down quietly to die; but I kept on whispering to him to think of us, and at last he heard. I guided him all the way. I could see them through the stones and trees. I made him hear me and know me, and I kept beside him through the day and through the night. But at last he grew impatient and would not stay his hand.

"I'll mark one of them, if I die for it," he muttered between his teeth, and shot a foe who came near. Then I cried to him to flee and he fled. I guided him for I could see them, and he could not.

"When we had nearly passed their line, however, a number of them blocked every way that we could go; but we could not stay, so I took him where they were fewest. We came to the edge of the wood. One from the trees aimed full at him. Then I seemed to call my body from this bed. I was afraid. Feel how my heart beats yet! But I stepped in the way. What did it matter? I was soon to die, anyhow. The bullet struck me near the heart and I fell. I had saved him. You do not believe me; but the mark is there."

She closed her eyes in exhaustion and said no more.

Later in the day she died. There was a curious puncture over her heart; and the newsboys were calling, "British Defeat!" in the streets outside.

OWEN OLIVER.





I THREW myself into the corner of the P.L.M. train, which was due to start in two minutes, and settled myself as comfortably as I could for a journey on the Paris, Lyons, and Mediterranean Railway to Marseilles. I had had just enough of Paris for a time; orders for the specialities dealt with by the firm for which I was travelling had not come in at all well in the capital, and I was rather disgusted with fate or the dulness of trade. I had expected great things during this journey, and, had my expectations been realised, my position in the firm would no doubt have been improved.

The carriage was empty, and I was glad of it, seeing that I was not in the best of tempers. I might be able to retrieve the position at Marseilles and send home some good orders, but I was obliged to confess to myself that such a contingency was not probable. I was tired and discontented; I wanted to be alone.

I spent the next two minutes in glaring at the door; I haven't the slightest idea why I did this but possibly I thought it might deter anyone else from entering. Then I heard the cry "*En voiture!*" and heaved a sigh of relief. Thank goodness, we were off!

But I gave expression to my thanks too quickly; the train was almost on the move when the door was flung open and a young man sprang into the compartment. Then the door was slammed and we steamed out of the station.

Well, there was no help for it and, after all, I supposed the newcomer would not eat me. Provided that he did not endeavour to make me listen to some wearying talk, I need not heed his presence. With these thoughts I took up my paper and began to read, my fellow-traveller making himself cosy in the corner diagonally opposite me.

Curiosity forced me to take a sidelong glance at my companion, after a lapse of a few minutes. He had a paper in his hands, but I doubted very much whether he was reading it; and the look on his face suggested deep thought and I mentally decided that he was reflecting on some weighty matter. He was about medium height, with light hair and moustache and somewhat effeminate in appearance. There was nothing particularly attractive about him, except perhaps his eyes, which struck me as being bright and piercing.

Having taken stock of the young Frenchman—for his

nationality was evident—I resumed my perusal of the newspaper, laying it down a few minutes afterwards in an attempt to get a short nap.

I do not know how long I slept; my slumber was interrupted by a more than usually severe jolt and I awoke with a start.

My first impulse was to look towards the opposite corner, where I saw my fellow traveller gazing at me with just the flicker of a smile on his lips. I suppose I ought to have looked for my bag to see that it was intact, but that did not worry me in the least, as it contained nothing but samples and some linen underclothing, neither of which seemed to me at that moment worth a thought.

I had not yet recovered my good humour.

"Monsieur has been sleeping," remarked the young man.

These were the first words he had spoken, and his voice had such a pleasant, musical ring about it that I was charmed and replied with a smile.

"Yes. I was very tired."

Then I suddenly remembered that we had both spoken English, and I asked him: "But you are French, are you not? Yet you speak English remarkably well."

"Oh, I was brought up almost entirely in England, that is the explanation."

There was a short musical laugh; clearly, he was pleased at having so nearly deceived me by his knowledge of our language.

The ice having been broken, he left his corner and took the seat directly opposite me. Some desultory remarks passed between us, and then we drifted into a lively conversation about French and English politics and forms of government. I should not like to say who brought up the subject of the overthrow of the French Republic; I only know that our conversation turned in that direction. I believe it was my companion who introduced it. Anyhow, we had a long talk about it and it gradually dawned upon me that M. Blouet—I learnt incidentally that his name was Blouet—was much troubled in mind; I have a faint recollection that he seemed pre-occupied in spite of the gay tone in which he conversed, and that his eyes often wandered to the window.

As we approached Lyons this anxiety became more evident and at last I was impelled to utter a delicate hint.

"It is true, monsieur; I am worried, I will confess it," replied M. Blouet. "You are English and I am confident that I can trust you. Let me tell you, and perhaps you may help me."

He spoke hurriedly and I became interested. His charming manner and my own resentment against things in general had brought me to that state of mind when I would have done anything that was not exactly against the laws of morality. I began to suspect complicity in some intrigue against the powers that were, and this added a palatable piquancy to the affair. I at once intimated my willingness to be of service.

"It is thus," continued the young Frenchman. "I have enemies, who wish to imprison me for purposes of their own. In this country it is so easy to fabricate a charge against any person whom you wish to keep out of the way; my enemies wish to put me aside, because that would mean great gain to them. Oh, it is too long a story to narrate entirely! And I am so worried that I should not tell it properly. It was dangerous for my liberty for me to stay in Paris, so I intended to go to London, where I have lived before and where everyone is free. Oh, it is a great country!"

He was getting excited, and by way of soothing him I remarked complacently:

"Yes, ours is a grand country to live in."

That was all I could think of, on the spur of the moment, but on looking back it seems to me that my words were calculated to make him feel more annoyed with his own land rather than produce a soothing effect.

"Yes, yes!" I evaded them at Paris, but instead of going direct to London I had to make this *détour*. I am going to the south and thence into Spain and from there I shall go to London. That will throw them off the scent. But I feel that I am not quite safe; it may be that they will attempt to catch me at Lyons—I know not, but I feel it. You, monsieur, belong to a chivalrous nation; if it must be so, will you deliver a letter for me in London? By so doing, you may secure my liberation if I am arrested. If that letter falls into their hands also, then I am indeed lost and their gain will be great, great!"

I intimated with great vigour that I would do my utmost to protect him from arrest, but he smiled sadly and shook his head. It was hopeless, he assured me in voluble tones; if he had the chance, he would make a dash for liberty. I thereupon expressed in decided accents my willingness to deliver the letter.

We were now within easy distance of Lyons. Blouet took a long envelope from an inner pocket and hastily scribbled something on it with a lead pencil. I honestly believe that he did not see what he was writing, for he raised his head and looked out of the window in the middle of his scribbling. I thought that he was going to hand it to me then and there, but he mechanically replaced it in his pocket. Shortly after this the train pulled up at Lyons.

There was a wait of some minutes at the station, I knew, and in the ordinary course of things I should have made my way to the buffet; on this occasion, however, I preferred to remain in the carriage. I wished to be at hand if any attempt were made upon the person of M. Blouet. I generally carried a revolver and I was debating whether I should risk the consequences and make use of it.

The minutes went past without any intrusion and the stopping time was nearly over; I took out my watch

and glanced at it, raising my face with a smile to tell my new-found friend that his fears were groundless, when I saw his face pale.

The next instant he had thrust the letter under my heavy coat, which lay on the seat beside me, and made a dash for the opposite door.

Almost at the same moment two men pulled open the door and one of them sprang in. There was an angry exclamation as he saw Blouet disappear through the opposite door; he made a dash at the fugitive, who contrived to deftly slam the door behind him, striking the man on the face and causing him to howl with pain and rage. My half-formed intention to use my revolver vanished at once, for I inwardly believed that Blouet would escape.

He had slipped through their fingers at this juncture and there was good reason to hope that even with such a short start he might elude them. Another idea flashed through my brain and I promptly resolved to act upon it; gathering up my coat with the precious letter folded inside, and seizing my bag, I left the station unnoticed—the officials were too excited over the Blouet incident to attend to their duties—and made my way into the town with the intention of stopping until the next day. But, as I passed into the street, I heard from the excited talk of several persons, that detectives were chasing a man charged with plotting against the Republic.

I was at first inclined to smile at this notion, but the more I reflected on it, the more probable it seemed, until at length, I arrived at the conviction that it was correct. Blouet's conversation pointed to it also. Here was a fine state of things; I had deliberately promised to deliver some treasonable documents! I felt that this was hardly fair to the country in which I was travelling, but—I had promised! And my spleen against the Parisian dealers who had withheld their orders egged me on and I resolved to fulfil my mission.

It was the evening of the following day when I arrived at Marseilles. My mood had entirely changed; my short stay at Lyons had been profitable—I had taken several good orders—and I felt on good terms with myself and everybody, especially myself. I wondered as I left the station whether I had been connected in the minds of the police with the conspirator, and I positively chuckled at the events of the past few hours. I was beginning to have quite a liking for the work of a conspirator.

It was too late to do business that day, so I engaged a room at a good hotel and arranged my toilet with a view to spending the evening at a music hall or theatre. I was putting the finishing touches to my hair—I am rather particular about my hair—when the door was quietly opened and a man, who I at once divined to be a police official, entered the room and shut the door behind him.

"May I ask, monsieur," I demanded in polite tones and in my best French, "why it is that I am honoured by this visit?"

"I am sorry to disturb you, monsieur," replied the visitor with equal suavity, "but you are bearer of treasonable documents entrusted to you by a person with whom you travelled from Paris to Lyons. The safety of the Republic demands that those documents should be given up to the police, and I am invested with authority to receive them. Monsieur will kindly hand them to me."

The polite manner in which he made the demand left nothing to be desired; at the same time, I knew very

well that it was imperative. I repressed a smile of satisfaction and gravely informed him that there was some mistake. Conspiracy work was getting interesting.

"No treasonable document, that I am aware, has come into my possession. Certainly, I have no such document and therefore cannot hand it to you," I explained. This was true, though evasive.

"I am sorry that monsieur declines to relinquish the treasonable documents," said the officer bowing. "In that case I have no course to follow but to arrest monsieur and search his luggage and clothing."

I made a spirited protest, showing my passport and standing on my dignity as a British subject, threatening the French Government with all sorts of penalties for the insult and I know not what. This tirade served my purpose which was to prevent any further reference to my travelling companion; I did not wish to tell lies, and I naturally had no desire that the officer should press the matter too closely. After an animated discussion, I agreed to allow him to search my belongings and my clothing, he consenting to accept this compromise. I first turned out all my pockets and convinced him that I had nothing concealed between the cloth and the lining; then I permitted him to work his own sweet will on my travelling coat and my bag.

When he had completed his task he stood up and looked puzzled. I believe that he half regretted having agreed to the compromise. I expected that he would tell me that I had hidden the documents or made away with them, but he was very quiet and finally bowed himself out with profuse apologies. I knew what that meant; I was to be "shadowed."

Then I went out to spend the evening, but I was by this time in a rather excited condition and the "turns" at the music hall were not to my liking. I left my seat and passed into the street with the intention of sauntering about Marseilles for an hour or so and then returning to my hotel. But my adventures were not over.

I was musing on the fact that the police had coupled me with Blouet and had tracked me to Marseilles, and was wondering how it had been done and whether they had learnt anything of my movements in Lyons—although later events seemed to be against their having any knowledge on the last point—when a hand was laid on my arm and a voice said:

"I am commissioned to ask you for the letter handed to you in the train."

Needless to say that I was startled by this intrusion upon my thoughts; however, I was not to be caught so easily as that and I replied coolly that I knew nothing of the letter in question.

The man, whose face I could not discern, hesitated for a few seconds with his hand still on my arm, and then left me abruptly.

I continued my walk, deep in thought now concerning the probable results of my work as a conspirator or as an abettor of a conspiracy. All at once a strong arm was placed round my throat and before I could cry out or make any resistance I was gagged and bound. I was carried for a short distance by my head and feet, face downwards, and any attempt to struggle would have ended in bodily injury; so I resigned myself to my fate for the time being. I was placed in a fiacre and driven I don't know where.

My captors took me to a room which was dimly lighted, unbound me and took the gag from my mouth. They lost no time in preliminaries, but came to the

point at once. It amounted to this: they knew me and that I had carried off the letter given to me by Blouet; they intended to deliver that letter themselves and they must have it.

My first thought was that this was a trick on the part of the police; the officials were pretending to be the friends of Blouet in the hope of ascertaining where the letter was, but the answers I received to my indefinite questions gradually convinced me that my captors were really friends of "the cause," whatever that might be.

"Well," I said at length, "I was requested to deliver the letter and I have begun my task. The documents are not in my possession; in fact, they are probably on the other side of the Channel by this time, as I have sent them to London by a special messenger."

Despite my conviction that these men were friends of the conspirators, or the conspirators themselves, I determined to be guarded in the information I gave them.

"That is nonsense, monsieur," said one of the men abruptly. "The police are on the watch and they would stop any messenger you might send, for we know that they have traced you to this city. What have you done with the letter?"

"The police have already satisfied themselves by a visit to my hotel that I am not in possession of the documents," I returned easily. Then I gave them an account of what had happened. "I tell you that I have despatched the letter to London; it has been taken by a Government official."

They looked at each other in amazement and then poured forth a torrent of questions; to which I simply replied that the letter was on its way to London in charge of a Government official and that if any friend of the cause would call upon me at my office two days later and bring my card, I would deliver it to the bearer.

Having said which, I took out my business card, signed my name at the back and handed it to the foremost man.

It was quite half an hour before they would let me go, but I refused to tell them anything more; and I suppose that they were convinced either of my sincerity or that I had parted with the letter, for they allowed me to depart unmolested.

On reflection, it occurred to me that there were two other reasons for letting me go; the first was that I casually allowed my revolver to be seen, and the second was that they guessed that the police would shadow me and that might be awkward for them, as the police might get upon their track.

I wandered about Marseilles for half an hour before I found myself in a familiar locality from which I could direct my steps to the hotel, but at last I reached my room and murmured inward thanks that the day was over.

Two days later I was in my office. A messenger came into my room to tell me that a young lady wished to see me; her name was Legard. Surmising that this visit was connected with the mysterious letter I asked the boy to show her in and see that our conversation was not interrupted—for the room was not entirely given up to me.

The young lady entered and, after the usual greetings, she opened a purse and took from it the card I had given to the men at Marseilles. In accordance with my promise I handed the letter to her.

"I could not have delivered it," I remarked, pointing to some illegible pencil strokes on the face of the envelope,

"as the pencil used by M. Blouet did not mark more than a few lines. It is impossible to read either the name or the address. But how is it that *you* are a conspirator?"

"First tell me, sir, how you got the letter to London." She had been speaking French, but now she lapsed into English. "You said that it was carried by a Government official—what does that mean?"

"Simply this," I replied. "I went direct from the railway station at Lyons to a shop where I could buy an envelope of suitable size; into that I put your letter and addressed it to a friend at Canterbury. A brief note requested him to readdress the inner packet to me at this office. Was it not perfectly true, therefore, that the important documents which the French Government was so anxious to seize were being conveyed to their destination under the care of their own officials?"

A rippling peal of laughter made me start to my feet and look fixedly at the young lady. The laugh was familiar; could it be that—

"Yes," the young lady said, divining my thoughts. "I am Blouet—masculine attire was my disguise. I had to sacrifice my hair—my lovely hair—and I must wear false locks until it grows again.

"How did we trace you? Oh that was easy; our organisation is very complete. But alas! The plot has been partly discovered and the best thing to be done with these documents is to destroy them." So saying, she walked to the fireplace and threw the unopened letters which had caused so much trouble, into the flames.

I asked her if she had much difficulty in eluding her pursuers.

"Not much," she replied "but I had to remain in hiding for several hours. When I was able to venture out I contrived to communicate to friends what had happened, with the result that you were siezed at Marseilles. I managed to get another disguise and escape to London; it was risky, but it was more risky to remain in France."

All the time she had been speaking I had examined her features narrowly and taken careful note of every inflection of the voice. I had no doubt whatever, that she was the young man with whom I had travelled from Paris to Lyons.

Did I marry her? Well, no, I didn't. I admit freely that I felt very much inclined to make her an offer, but it struck me that such a strong-minded young lady would want to rule things entirely and absolutely, and I prefer to do the ruling myself. She is now quite a *grande dame* in Paris, and if the police know of her identity, they do not trouble her. GEO. DAY.

"Your son has gone out, hasn't he, Jones?"

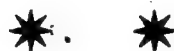
"Yes, miss. I see from the newspaper his regiment is in Khaki, but I can't find it on the map. Maybe you've heard tell of the place?"

"Did you take Johnny to school, Jeremiah?" asked Mrs. Boggs of her husband.

"I did," said he. "An excellent school it is, Matilda. The scholars are models of deportment, the curriculum is first-class, and the master a man of ability—at least, that is the way he struck me."

"You ought to have stayed about an hour," said Johnny, "and seen how he struck me."

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Write all your solutions on one sheet of paper, putting the number against each. Post the batch in an envelope marked "Brain Gymnasium," to reach the Editor, SHORT STORIES, 18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C., by Monday, April 9nd, 1900.

No. 76.

Group together the sixteen asterisks shown below so that exactly six squares of equal size are formed by drawing lines from one asterisk to another.

* * * * *

No. 77.

~~LID-MOP-ONE-STY-LESS-EAR-~~
~~CARS-LEG-NOT-FANG-SHE-OLD-~~
~~EAT.~~

TAKE two consecutive letters from each of the above words, and arrange the letters so that a well-known proverb can be read.

No. 78.

I A I A E E O U A O O E A O E E E E A
I O E E O U A I A E E O E I O E E E

THE above are the vowels, in the correct order, of a verse from a very famous British naval ballad.

No. 79.

I AM a word of two syllables. By changing the third letter of my first, you leave me without my head. Should you wish to restore it, simply deprive me of my second. What word am I?

No. 80.

A SCHOOLMASTER had a dozen boys standing in front of his desk. He asked the first boy a question, and, receiving a wrong answer, sent him to the bottom of the row. The second boy gave the right answer, and was told to go to the top seat. The third boy in turn was sent to the bottom of the row, and the fourth boy to the second seat, and so on. If the lads had been numbered from one to twelve, how must they have stood so that they resumed their seats in numerical order?

No. 81.

Form two word squares, the connecting word of which is the name of a town in the south of England. Only the following consonants are to be used:

B D D M N N N N R S S S S T T W W.

RESULT OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

Nos. 52 to 57.

In the above competition forty-two competitors were absolutely correct. We have divided the prize, and are forwarding a shilling postal order to each of the following:

W. T. Cook, Homerton; E. Hutchings, High Holborn; E. Tempest, Clapton; D. Finigan, Clapton; H. B. Thompson, Bracknell, Berks; E. H. Robertson, Newcastle-on-Tyne; J. Kean, Edinburgh; A. F. Smith, Hornsey; Miss A. Wallis, High Wycombe; J. E. M. Hall, Brockley; Charles Harwood, Forest Hill; W. Gyde, Warley; I. M. Child, Derby; T. Josiah, Paddington; James Hardy, St. Pancras Square, N.W.; W. Thomas, Kentish Town; E. Coombs, Wilberforce Road, N.; James Matthews, Chiswick; Miss Fazzi, Newcastle-on-Tyne; Mrs. Robertson, Newcastle-on-Tyne; Mrs. E. Davis, Barnstable; M. W. Daws, Hull; Miss E. Robertson, Newcastle-on-Tyne; M. E. Ridge, Tulse Hill; M. C. Rimmer, Streatham; W. J. Barter, Cork; F. Bessant, Falmouth; A. Plentyn, Llangollen; W. J. Griffiths, Oswestry; Mrs. A. Palmer, Morecambe; D. P. Jones, Brixton; C. F. Bigger, Morecambe; S. J. Brewer, Canonbury; A. W. Chapman, Wimbledon; H. Barnes, Camberwell; C. H. Poynter, Southampton; J. W. Johnson, Crewe; W. C. Lee, Stockport; H. Quinton, Southampton; J. H. Cockerill, Kingsland Road, N.; Miss E. Chapman, Wimbledon, S.W.; S. D. Cray, Upper Holloway, N.

SOLUTIONS TO PUZZLES

Appearing in No. 584, March 10th.

No. 58.

TAR-TAR-Y.

No. 59.

DROUGHT-TROUGH-ROUGH-UGHT.

No. 60.

HORATIUS:

No. 61.

No. 62.

No. 63.

SIX-SIXTY-SILLY.

PENS
EVIL
NINA
SLAVERY
EMEUL
REEL
YULE

2	3	4	3	2
4	5	5	5	4
2	3	4	3	2

SHORT STORIES ADVERTISEMENT RATES.

Single column, per inch, per insertion	£0 10 0
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Full page inside, facing page of matter, either white paper or 2nd or 3rd page of cover, or back page, per insertion	10 0 0
Half-page	5 0 0
Quarter-page	2 10 0
Eighth-page	1 5 0
Front page, whole	12 10 0
half	6 5 0

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BY EVERY GOOD NURSE.**

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FOR**

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SIXTY
YEARS.**



HOLLOWAY'S
PILLS and OINTMENT.

Their
combined
use will
quickly
relieve
and cure

INFLUENZA,

LIVER AND KIDNEY

COMPLAINTS, SKIN

ERUPTIONS and

AFFECTIONS OF THE THROAT, CHEST & LUNGS.

Manufactured only at 78 New Oxford St. (late 533 Oxford St.), London. Sold by all Chemists and Medicine Vendors.

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KAPUTINE

SAFE REMEDY CURES

**HEADACHE and NEURALGIA
IMMEDIATELY,**

And is sold by all leading Chemists in Packets of 18 Doses, 1s.

To ANYONE HAVING THE LEAST DIFFICULTY, it will be sent post free for 12 Stamps by "KAPUTINE Ltd.," Huddersfield; or, on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope, A. M. Kaputine, Huddersfield, you will receive a free sample.

The fact that "KAPUTINE" is recommended by many leading Medical Men, and is used in National Hospitals and Infirmarys proves that it is THE, THE recognised
SAFE REMEDY FOR HEADACHES.

Refuse Substitutes and demand "KAPUTINE," the Safe Remedy. There is no substitute "LIKE IT"; nothing "AS GOOD"; nothing "SIMILAR."

KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR.

GIGANTIC SPRING SALE, 1900.

A Stock of 10,000 PATENT WADDLED QUILTS, TORALUMS, OR BED COVERS
(as illustration).

Covered with Oriental Reversible Soft Sateen with double border. Size 84in. by 60in. These Quilts are offered below anything in the Wholesale Trade and cause the greatest consternation to the buyer, wondering how they can be produced for the money.

SPECIAL OFFER.
Three Quilts for 10/-, or Six for 19/-, or Twelve for 38/-.



Sale Price
3/6
Each.
Post Free 6d. ex.

At an Enormous Reduction to Clear Out.
Belmont, Pavilion Parade, Brighton, 4/1.00 — Mrs. FODGE writes: "Who, three Waddled Quilts Messrs. F. Hodgson & Son sent me are very warm and light. I am very

SPECIAL

1900.

SPECIALLY REDUCED INTRODUCTION SALE

PARCEL WITH FREE GIFT

enclosed, consisting of

- 1 Magnificently Rich Cream-Coloured Curly Sheepskin Hearthrug, average size 6 feet by 3 feet, perfection in quality.
- 1 Beautiful Reversible Art Crimson Plush Bed Rug, Sofa Cover, or Table Cover, double warp, very heavy, size 50 inches by 78 inches.
- 1 Beautiful Silver Goat-skin Door Mat, lined with a cloth throughout, pinked edges, best finish, ornamental to any room.
- 1 Elegant Hair Brush, highly finished, with mirror-back.

THE LOT

10/6

Postaged extra



"Given" Away.

Providing **SHORT STORIES** Coupon, 31/3/1900, is quoted, a **FREE GIFT** will be enclosed — a very handsome Electro Silver Plated "OWL" PEPPER STAND with coloured eyes and gilt feet. Cash returned if not satisfied. (Signed) F. HODGSON & SON.

The "Queen's Royal" Household Carpets and Hearthrugs are extolled by all the Nations of the Earth. Gigantic Sale of the "QUEEN'S ROYAL" Household. **2/- HEARTHUGS**. In REVERSIBLE RICH TURKEY PATTERNS, measuring 6ft. long, and 3ft. wide. These HEARTHUGS have gained a world-wide reputation for MAGNIFICENCE, CHEAPNESS, and UTILITY, having no equal. Registered New Designs, and considered Works of Art. Thousands of Repeat Orders and Testimonials received, giving the highest satisfaction. **SPECIAL OFFER.** — Three for 5/6; Six for 11/3; Twelve for 22/-. The "Queen's Royal" Household Carpets and Hearthrugs are patronised by Royalty, Nobility, and Clergy from all parts of the Empire. Gigantic Sale of the "Queen's Royal" Household Reversible Rich Turkey Patterns.

CARPETS

Trade Mark on all Goods. Beware of Imitations.

Admittedly the Cheapest in the World. Woven without seam. Altogether superior quality, with handsome border to correspond. A marvel for excellence and beauty. Thousands of Repeat Orders and Testimonials received, giving the highest satisfaction. When ordering, please mention 1/- for Bed, Dining, Drawing, or Sitting Room, and any particular colour preferred.

6ft. by 9ft. ... 7/6	10ft. by 12ft. ... 18/-
6ft. by 12ft. ... 9/-	12ft. by 15ft. ... 21/-
6ft. by 15ft. ... 10/6	12ft. by 18ft. ... 19/6
6ft. by 18ft. ... 11/6	12ft. by 21ft. ... 22/6
9ft. by 12ft. ... 13/6	12ft. by 24ft. ... 25/6
9ft. by 15ft. ... 15/6	12ft. by 27ft. ... 30/-
9ft. by 18ft. ... 16/6	12ft. by 30ft. ... 35/6

REDUCED SALE PRICE.

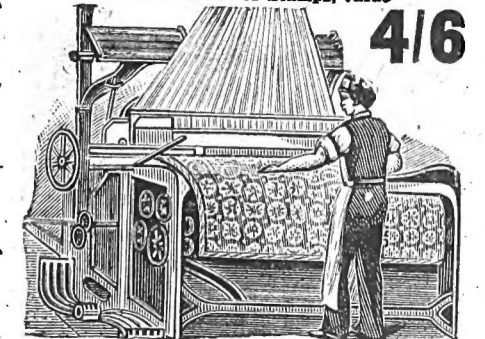
Octagon Villa, The Lizard, B.S.O., 15/8/98. — J. CARWARDINE, Esq., writes: "I am very pleased with the Carpet you sent me. I have saved 50 per cent. by giving you the order. I paid half as much again to a local tradesman for Carpets the same quality a year ago. I have never been so pleased of any former purchase."

Also RICH VELVET PILE STAIR CARPETS, bordered to match,

OUR NEW VENTURE. — Yes, Two different Pattern Hearthrugs or Carpets for the Price of One! (Copyright). H.R.H. Prince of Battenberg. Sir Henry Bellingham. Princesses Elisabeth and Alice. H.R.H. Prince K. Bight Siam. Sir E.H. Blair, Bart. Marquis of Breadalbane. Commence.

To Readers of "Short Stories," 31/3/1900, on receipt of Postal Order or Stamps, value

4/6



(Regd.) We will send you **THE LARGEST GENUINE REVERSIBLE CARPET IN BRUSSELS PATTERN WITH RUG** ever sold at the price, direct from the Looms to any address on receipt of amount. Suitable for drawing-room, dining-room, bedroom, etc., bordered and woven in Brussels patterns, as an advertisement for our goods, thus saving any middle profit. Remember these are woven, and are made of a material almost equal to wool. Thousands of these Carpets have been already sold at double these prices.

SPECIAL OFFER—2 CARPETS and 2 RUGS, 8s. [Out this out.]

ILLUSTRATED BARGAIN CATALOGUES OF CARPETS, HEARTHUGS, TABLE LINEN, CURTAINS, etc., POST FREE, if mentioning **Short Stories** when writing.

We rely upon spontaneous Repeat Orders from our Clients for the maintenance of our Trade. Established nearly a Quarter of a Century. All orders despatched same day to rotation as they arrive by post. N.B.—Foreign Orders executed and packed free, and shipped at lowest rates. Telegraphic Address: "EOLITSE, LEEDS." Telephone, No. 918. Cheques and P.O.'s payable to—

F. HODGSON & SON, Manufacturers, Importers, and Merchants, WOODSLEY ROAD, LEEDS.

Colossal Sale of Rich Velvet Pile Real

BRUSSELS HEARTHUGS 5/6

In Rich Oriental and Indian Art Designs, measuring 6ft. by 3ft., which for price, real value, weight and fineness of manufacture will be found unapproachable.

SPECIAL OFFER.—3 Rugs, 16/-; 6 for 31/-

"Melville Castle, Glasswade, Midlothian, June 1st. The Right Honourable The Viscountess MELVILLE writes: "I am very pleased with the 'Royal' Velvet Hearthrugs to hand, and would like four more Hearthrugs. Her ladyship would also like two Velvet Carpets at 38/-, one ditto at 50/- to match them. Cheques 28 Mds. inclosed."

COLOSSAL SALE OF RICH VELVET PILE

REAL BRUSSELS CARPETS

Extraordinarily Heavy, very Best Quality. Newest and Choicest Designs. In Old Gold, Sultana, Terra Cotta, Crimson, Sky, Navy, and the latest colours. With handsome border to correspond. Guaranteed to wear for years and give every satisfaction. The sizes and prices as follows (all ready for putting down):

REDUCED SALE PRICE LIST.

4ft. by 7ft. ... 11/-	VELVET	9ft. by 12ft. ... 38/-
6ft. by 9ft. ... 18/-	PILE	11ft. by 12ft. ... 47/-
7ft. by 9ft. ... 21/-	BRUSSELS	12ft. by 13ft. ... 58/-
8ft. by 9ft. ... 28/-	CARPET	12ft. by 14ft. ... 59/-
9ft. by 10ft. ... 33/-	SQUARES	12ft. by 18ft. ... 77/-

Altogether superior quality, with handsome border to correspond. A marvel of excellence and beauty. Thousands of repeat orders and testimonials received, giving the highest satisfaction. When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing, or Sitting Room, and any particular colour preferred.

Ramsden, Charlbury, 4/3/98. — Lady HICKS BEACH writes: "Will Messrs. F. Hodgson and Son send her one of their 'Queen's Royal' Carpets, 9ft. by 12ft. 11/-? Cheques enclosed. The other parcel received safely, and I am pleased with it."

18in. wide, 1/8 per yard; 22in. wide, 2/- per yard. 27in. wide, 2/3 per yard.

Duchess of Wellington. Archbishop of York. Marchioness of Breadalbane. Princesses of Crois.

PRODIGIOUS SALE OF THE "PRUDENTIAL"

TURKEY PATTERN CARPETS
(Regd.)

Reversible, woven throughout, bordered, richly blended in several colours to suit any furniture. These goods cannot be distinguished from real Brussels when laid down, and cannot be excelled in durability.

Size	Each	also	Each
6ft. by 9ft. ... 2/11	REDUCED	10ft. by 12ft. ... 11/6	11/6
6ft. by 12ft. ... 3/11	SALE	8ft. by 15ft. ... 12/6	12/6
7ft. by 9ft. ... 4/9	PRICE.	12ft. by 13ft. ... 12/9	12/9
7ft. by 12ft. ... 5/11		12ft. by 15ft. ... 14/6	14/6
8ft. by 9ft. ... 7/11		12ft. by 18ft. ... 15/9	15/9
9ft. by 10ft. ... 8/6		12ft. by 21ft. ... 19/6	19/6
8ft. by 12ft. ... 9/6		12ft. by 24ft. ... 22/6	22/6

When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing, or Sitting Room, and any particular colour preferred.

A Reversible "Prudential" Hearthrug (Regd.), to match above Carpets, sent for 1/6 extra, a size 2yd. long and 1yd. wide. Special Offer, Three Hearthrugs for 4/3, or Six for 8/-, or Twelve for 15/6, sterling value. All mentioning **Short Stories** when writing.

Short Stories CARPET COUPON. 31/3/1900.

On receipt of this Coupon and P.O. or Stamps for amount, we guarantee to send any goods as above to your address in any part of the United Kingdom. Cash returned in full if not satisfied. (Signed) F. HODGSON & SON.